

On Mechanism in Hegel's Social and Political Philosophy

Nathan Ross

STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY

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Abbreviations

Please note that the following abbreviations will be used for frequently cited primary texts, followed by page numbers.

- EP Fredrick Beiser, ed., *The Early Political Writings of German Romanticism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
- HS II Otto Pögeler, ed., *Hegel Studien V. II* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1963).
- Ideen Johan Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, ed. Gerhardt Schmidt (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1966).
- GW Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1968-2003). Cited by volume.
- KSA Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Freidrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1966). Cited by volume.
- SW Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1969-1986). Cited by volume.

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Introduction

Hegel defines the concept of mechanism in rather concise terms when he introduces it in his *Logic*: “This makes up the character of a mechanism that, whatsoever relation pertains between those things that are connected, this relation is a foreign one to them, which does not concern their nature, and even if they are bound together with the appearance of unity, it remains nothing more than a placing together, mixing, assembling.”¹ This book will focus on the role that this concept plays in Hegel’s philosophical comprehension of modern society and of political bodies. To what degree does modern society embody a structure that is mechanistic in the sense of the above definition, and to what degree is such a structure desirable or problematic? In the process of treating this question, however, the book will also take up the issue as to what role this concept of mechanism plays in the development of Hegel’s philosophical method. How does Hegel arrive at his definition of mechanism, and what ontological status does it have in describing the nature of reality? Hence this book will operate primarily on two levels of Hegel’s philosophical system: on the level of his *Logic*, in which he develops the concept of mechanism, and on the level of his political philosophy, in which I believe the argument that he develops in his *Logic* comes to play a decisive role.

On the surface, the concept of mechanism hardly seems to be a central concept to either of these aspects of Hegel’s philosophy. Prominent readers of Hegel speak of his ‘organic world-view,’ and they assure us that Hegel’s real concern as a political thinker consists in providing a foundation for human freedom. What two concepts could stand more in opposition to mechanism than those of organism and freedom? A glance at Hegel’s writings seems to confirm these readers: Hegel’s *Logic* surpasses the concept of mechanism in the course of arriving at a more developed notion of objective systems, and though Hegel makes frequent use of machine and mechanism metaphors from his earliest political writings on, the concept of mechanism cannot be considered a

fundamentally explanative concept for Hegel's notion of modern 'ethical life.' But, as I will argue here in my introduction, mechanism is hardly an unessential detail either, which may be cast aside in constructing a big picture of what Hegel thought about social and political matters. The greatest difficulty in reading Hegel consists in the fact that the relation between the process of exegesis and the conclusion in his thought is quite different than many of his readers would like it to be; we would all like to know what a thinker's conclusions are, so that we may stop there and evaluate what the thinker has to teach us. But Hegel always insists that the lesson in his philosophy is not to be found in his conclusions, but in the work that he undertakes to get there. And this work is often paradoxically at odds with the apparent conclusion. The end of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is 'absolute knowing,' but the work itself is a series of finite, untenable forms of subjectivity that must be rigorously explored, corrected, and seen to be the opposite of its initial concept, before we may move on to the next phase. Thus while mechanism might be a moment that Hegel moves through in order to get to a richer level of insight, namely to the notions of organism and freedom, it might be fair to say that we will learn more about Hegel's notion of freedom by looking at what he says about mechanism than by studying his cryptic definitions of freedom in isolation from that path he takes to get there. A human being is 'more' than a mere mechanical aggregation of objects, and we are free insofar as we are able to recognize and enter into practical commitments that are not mechanistic in this way. But in Hegel's particular way of thinking, we only understand this 'more' if we understand what is insufficient about trying to think in mechanistic terms. And we only discover this insufficiency by trying to take the mechanistic way of thinking as far as we possibly can, by exploring every implication of the initial definition of mechanism.

Of all of the intermediate moments in Hegel's philosophy, what makes mechanism a particularly valuable one to examine? The notion of mechanism intersects several distinct parts of Hegel's philosophy in a way that few truly determinate concepts do, and at the same time, it is prevalent in both his early writings and his latter system, and it ties Hegel's philosophical development to debates that were going on in the political philosophy of his Romantic contemporaries in Germany. By investigating these points of intersection in this way, I have arrived at several points in Hegel's philosophy that bear a deeper relevance to how we understand Hegel's political philosophy, how we understand his philosophical method and how we understand his relation to his contemporaries.

In what follows in the introduction, I will trace out what I take to be the master arguments of the book, and in so doing, present what I see to be

the contribution of these arguments to broader issues in Hegel scholarship and in philosophy in general.

HEGEL'S RESPONSE TO ROMANTIC COMMUNITARIANISM

At the time in which this book is being written it seems necessary to reassess the relationship between Hegel's political philosophy and that of his Romantic contemporaries in Germany, such as Johan Gottfreid Herder, Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis. The reason why this problem weighs now in particular stems from the emergence over the last generation of the so called communitarianism debate. This debate considers the idea that modern individuals have become fundamentally isolated from the kind of ethical community that gives them a context in which to develop ethical virtues, the ability to communicate and enjoy cultural traditions. The communitarian argues that since modern societies are organized around large-scale economic interests and centralized government administration, and not around living ties, like racial or ethnic identity, family or clan loyalty and religious unity, the individuals within such societies become like atoms that are thrown about without any living, intuitive sense of their place within the human world around them. Proponents of communitarianism have been quick to assimilate both Hegel and the philosophers of German Romanticism to their cause, without however taking account of the degree to which Hegel was deeply critical of the communitarian strands of thought that were present in his own day.² As this reading goes, Hegel must be read as a thinker who is deeply critical of the rise of modern individuality and the loss of traditional cultural and religious structures that provided individuals for so long with the orientation that they needed in order to relate to the society around them as a moral community. This reading identifies Hegel with an 'organic' vision of political bodies, which considers the individuals as finding their meaning and purpose fulfilled only in the smooth functioning of the whole.

The concept of mechanism, I will argue, provides an important foil for such a simplified communitarian reading of Hegel, and a key for assessing the relation of Hegel to the Romantics on the issue of ethical community, especially since neither Hegel nor the Romantics made much use of the term 'community.' By looking at what Hegel thinks about the idea that society can be thought of as a mechanism, and how his usage of this term differs from that of his peers, we will see not only that Hegel does not belong within the tradition of communitarianism, but that his thought could reinvigorate this contemporary debate by offering a new conception of how individuals can belong to a social fabric and yet remain autonomous within it. But in order

to see that Hegel's analysis of mechanism represents such an alternative, we will first need to see how his usage of this term relates to that of the German Romantic school.

In frequently describing the modern state as a 'machine,' the Romantic theorists of Hegel's time critique what they see to be the alienating aspects of modern, post-enlightenment political and economic developments. This critical notion then acts as a foil for their own ideal of an 'organic society,' a community of people bound together in a more truly integrated way by their common traditions, language, art and morality. Thus I will argue that the Romantics' use of the terms mechanism and organism represent a kind of conceptual proxy for the position called 'communitarianism' in contemporary debates. Their critique of mechanism is first and foremost directed against the modern, post-Napoleonic conception of the state, and what they are most critical of in the state is the way in which it atomizes individuals and stifles their sense of tradition and social solidarity.

Although Hegel also develops a critique of the mechanistic aspects of the modern state in his early writings, he demonstrates in subsequent years an increasing awareness of the inescapability of the 'mechanistic' aspects of modern society, and even of the positive ethical gains that can be made by embracing these mechanistic aspects of modern society in a guarded way. In general, Hegel comes to use the logic of mechanism to describe those aspects of the modern, industrial economy that he treats in the 'civil society' in his *Philosophy of Right*: the industrialization of labor, the rise of self-interest as a constitutive force in politics, and the need for state intervention in managing the economy. His response to the growing power of civil society is not to negate it or to call on a reinvigorated notion of ethical or cultural community, but to attempt a conceptual grasp of the way in which evolving political institutions can contain these new developments in the economy and make them into aspects of a new model of ethical existence. Hence Hegel's conceptual response to the challenge of diagnosing and treating mechanistic tendencies in modern society leads him in the opposite direction from the Romantics, for instead of negating mechanism he seeks to contain it, and his ideal of an organic social entirety is not community based in common customs and artistic traditions, but the state that includes and yet regulates the development of the modern economy.

There are in my view two problems with interpreting Hegel as a communitarian: on the one hand, Hegel gives an important role to the element of bourgeois self-interest in the formation of the political identity of individuals; on the other hand, Hegel sees the authority of the state as resting not on tradition, nor on the felt unity of a people, but on its ability to respond to

inherent structural problems of civil society in an adequately universal way. Both of these points will become clear by elucidating the way in which Hegel transforms the themes of mechanism and organism that he inherits from the Romantics: unlike his peers, Hegel does not oppose the mechanistic and the organic as two anti-nomical models of society or forms of historical development, but instead he argues that an organism is 'more organic' when it can posit its mechanical functions as an integral part of itself. This argument will be elucidated in phases during the first three chapters of the book: the first chapter will treat the themes of mechanism and organism in the political philosophy of Herder and the Jena Romantics, in order to demonstrate which aspects of the state they criticized as mechanistic; the second chapter will then describe a similar gesture in Hegel's earliest philosophical writings, while taking care to distinguish the distinctive elements; the third chapter will then present the development during Hegel's Jena years of a position that is more or less suggestive of his final stance on the relation of civil society and the state, and it will demonstrate how his reassessment of the concepts of mechanism and organism plays a definitive role in this development. The first three chapters will thus be developmental in their method, concerned with tracing an evolving concept in Hegel's philosophy, and contrasting this evolution to the views of the Romantics. Taken together, these three chapters will argue that the concepts of organism and mechanism are central figures that Hegel uses in order to develop his critique of the political philosophy of German Romanticism, and they will demonstrate that the way in which Hegel thinks about these concepts determines the way in which he develops his distinctive political prescriptions.

THE RELATION OF LOGIC TO *REALPHILOSOPHIE*

Hegel writes in the preface to his *Philosophy of Right* that this work assumes an acquaintance with the logical method that he worked out in his *Science of Logic*.³ And yet it has become a familiar ritual for contemporary, English language books on Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* to begin by openly disavowing the pretensions of Hegel's *Logic*, or at least by asserting that their interpretation of Hegel's political philosophy can stand independent of the validity of Hegel's logical undertaking.⁴ This book takes a diametrically opposed approach to understanding Hegel's political philosophy: in this work I seek to show how a specific set of logical arguments that Hegel develops regarding mechanism plays a constitutive role in Hegel's political philosophy.

This book does not attempt to construct a global theory on the relation of Hegel's logic to his *Realphilosophie*; indeed, I believe the reason why

many readers reject the usefulness of Hegel's *Logic* in grasping his *Realphilosophie* is that they attempt to decide the issue before even delving into the specific dialectical arguments of either science. Instead of such a global approach, this book will seek to elucidate the logical form of a specific argument in Hegel's *Logic*, and then show how this argument can be brought to bear on resolving difficult interpretive issues in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Thus this book will support the notion that Hegel's *Logic* need not be read as one totalizing argument that can only be taken up from its conclusion, but rather as a series of 'partial mediations' that can be deeply insightful when taken on their own argumentative merits and applied to solving specific philosophical problems.

In the chapter on mechanism from the *Science of Logic*, Hegel elucidates the notion that mechanism is a purely logical form of thought, not first and foremost a kind of objectivity residing in natural bodies. A mechanism is any set of 'objects' (whether rocks, people, words on a page or thoughts) that are aggregated together in a set of relations that are external to them. From here, Hegel describes how this initial thought form generates inherent contradictions that lead to notions of mechanical processes and eventually to the articulation of an 'absolute mechanism,' that is, a mechanistic system in which bodies are organized in gravitational relations.⁵ At this point in the text of the *Logic* Hegel gives an illustration of how this 'absolute mechanism' can be applied to understanding the nature of the state as a relation between economic and political institutions. This passage has been given little attention by scholars of Hegel's political philosophy, embedded as it is in the *Logic*, though I believe that the subject matter that it treats puts this passage in the position of addressing some of the most profound conceptual controversies in Hegel's political philosophy. I argue that this passage on absolute mechanism from the *Logic* gives a conceptual schema for understanding the relation between civil society and the state in Hegel's political philosophy. This is one of the most difficult points in Hegel's political philosophy, and tied up with it are several questions of on-going political importance: how can individuals be free when the economy on which they depend for their subsistence alienates their labor and endangers their economic security? How can the state act in a regulatory manner on economic processes without destroying the subjective sense of self-activity and independence that the economy creates? What is the proper form of political representation in a state in which most citizens are largely indifferent to the functioning of the political whole? These are all questions concerning the relation between those moments that Hegel calls civil society and the state, and making out Hegel's own answer to these questions will only be possible if we can first elucidate the conceptual

logic for how Hegel relates these two spheres. This conceptual logic will then serve to fill in the indeterminacies that are contained in Hegel's account of these institutions in the *Philosophy of Right*.

From early in his philosophical career Hegel was fascinated with planetary mechanics.⁶ In his *Logic*, he describes the 'absolute mechanism' as a kind of objective system in which there are three distinct kinds of objects: the center point, the dependent objects, and the non-self-sufficient objects (i.e. satellites). This system of objects makes up a form of mechanism that is 'absolute' to the degree that each of these kinds of objects mediates between the other kinds of objects and the objective entirety. Thus the coherence of motion in such a system is explicable purely through the conceptual logic of how the different kinds of objects relate. But how can this conception of an absolute mechanism serve to describe modern political bodies? It must first be made clear that the three kinds of objects in this system do not correspond to three kinds of people or citizens (this would lead to a rather antiquated and hierarchical conception of the state as a solar system). Rather they correspond to three distinct aspects of social existence to which every member of society is exposed: first there is the relation between the individual and his or her socially produced needs; then there is the relation of the state as a form of political administration to these needs; finally there is the relation of the individual to the state administration. I argue that for Hegel, the task of political philosophy is to demonstrate how each of these spheres of our modern social-political existence serves to mitigate the one-sidedness of each of the other spheres. Each of these spheres of social activity is both incomplete, and instrumental to each of the others, but together they form an account of political institutions in which the individual is free in relation to these institutions. Only a state that really manages to capture this set of syllogistic relations can reconcile us with those aspects of social and political experience that are inherent in modern society. On the other hand, a state that attempts to posit one of these relations without taking it as a product of the others will lead to an institution with a kind of social-political finitude that leaves the individual unable to reconcile his or her needs with the actual conditions of modern social life.

HEGEL ON DEMOCRACY AND MARKET REGULATION IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

The central political issue that this book will explore is the relation between the moments of civil society and the state in Hegel's philosophy. With these two terms, Hegel seeks to mark off two emerging institutions of modern

society: civil society describes the totality of non-political, market oriented institutions and practices, while the state (at least when taken in its narrower meaning) describes the explicit framework of political action whereby a society regulates and unifies itself into a sovereign body. It has been noted by many scholars that Hegel develops within his account of civil society an astute critical grasp of the problems that plague modern, free-market industrial societies. He describes the way in which modern labor tends towards a kind of mechanistic quality that dulls the subjectivity of workers and makes them unable to experience the social context of their labor. He also argues that the very nature of the industrial production of needs and the means for fulfilling these needs leads to an increase in economic inequality and a form of poverty particular to modern society. In light of these dangers, Hegel advances the right of the individual to be saved from such poverty in the course of finding ethical meaning within the social institutions of the modern state.

Still, despite Hegel's often insightful diagnosis of the structural flaws of modern economic structures and his somewhat lofty defense of the state, it is hard to see how in Hegel's account the state actually solves the problems that he diagnoses. In my view, Hegel's central contribution to thinking about the political regulation of commercial life does not consist in any concrete conception of what forms of economic regulation the state should pursue (he offers a rather conventional assortment of common state practices at the time, and demonstrates an awareness of the problems in each). Rather his contribution consists in the way in which he thematizes the synthesis of political freedom and market regulation. Hegel realizes that individuals in modern states have already assumed largely 'liberal' bourgeois identities as a result of the very systems in which they earn their bread. Without denying the necessity in the kinds of self-interest that such individuals experience, Hegel seeks to describe a form of politics that can nevertheless address the structural flaws endemic to this system of production. This is only possible through a theory of economic regulation distinct from that of the enlightened paternalism that was prevalent in Germany at that time; Hegel offers instead a theory that gives the bourgeois individual a way of participating in a cohesive political structure that does not simply let the market have its free sway. My thesis is that Hegel's conception of such complex social-political structure can only be understood by turning to the conception of absolute mechanism from the *Logic*, in which Hegel describes a series of inter-related syllogisms that draw together the social and the political aspects of modern life. What emerges is not a radically new vision of Hegel's political philosophy, but a structure for clarifying some of the ambiguous and tenuous

points that commentators have long dwelled on in Hegel's transition from civil society to the state.

There are primarily three ways in which civil society and the state are related according to this syllogistic structure: citizens' economic activities 'form' them for political life, by imbuing their individualistic habits and inclinations with a relation to the social whole; the state regulates the economy in order to make sure that all members of society partake of this formation and have access to the benefits of economic progress; and the action of the state itself is constituted in a representative manner as animated by the interests of diverse social sectors. Hegel's real interest is in depicting this set of syllogisms as each implying and depending upon the others. The danger that state regulation of the economy deprive individuals of the sense of their dignity and social formation through their own activity is mitigated for Hegel by a conception of state action as 'representative' of individuals' particular identities within the social system. But Hegel's theory of political representation is distinct from many liberal ones in that he argues against the practice of elections, and instead advances a model in which citizens are represented through professional organizations that take into account their particular disposition and class identity (which he calls 'corporations'). Only such a system of representation, Hegel argues, can avoid the danger present in modern democracy of atomizing individuals and rendering them incapable of articulating their interests as class interests.

Chapter One

The Critique of Mechanism in the Political Philosophy of Herder and German Romanticism

The political thought of Hegel and the German Romantic thinkers begins from a different starting point than classic Western political theory: while the dominant strands of French and English political philosophy depart from the relation of the individual to political institutions, these German thinkers depart from the relation of already formed society to political institutions. The difference between these starting points can be made evident by appealing to the distinct circumstance in which German thinkers found themselves around the turn of the 19th century: while British and French thinkers were forced to deal with strong political bodies and then with actual political revolutions in their own countries and conceptualize the meaning of these changes, these Germans lived in a vacuum between the fall of the holy Roman empire and the erection of a lasting German state. They lived in a time when German society existed without any real political institutions capable of organizing it and containing it on the level of other European states of the time. This strange deficiency in the German political situation actually provided these thinkers with a unique intellectual challenge that eluded the French and English: how can one think the relation between already existing social structures (economic, religious and cultural) and evolving political institutions? What inherent deficiencies in society make political structures necessary? What dangers arise from allowing newly invented political institutions to intervene in already given sets of social practices? While the politics of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau generally construct the role of political institutions from the perspective of the inherent subjective rights of individual human beings, the politics of both Hegel and Romanticism see the state as merely one kind of social institution that must coexist along with other forms of social organization that have already formed the individual in important ways. Thus we are far less likely to find the fictional state of nature in the thought of the Germans, since they do not think of the relation of the naked,

unformed individual to the political authority of the state, but instead of the relation of a series of organized social relations to the missing institution that would have authority over them.

The concepts of mechanism and organism are among the central tools that these German thinkers use to conceptualize the relationship between society and the state. The purpose of this chapter is to prepare the way for discussing this issue in Hegel by looking at how his Romantic predecessors use the concepts of mechanism and organism in a political context. The chapter will admittedly be selective, pursuing mainly the thought of J.G. Herder, Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, so as to give a coherent picture of some of the most significant political theorists in Germany to develop an 'organic' notion of society. Hegel's political thought is radically different from that of the Romantics, mainly because of the difference in how Hegel conceives of the relation between society and the state: while the Romantics follow Herder in viewing the organic forces of culture, religion and moral custom as the real core of society, and thus see modern political institutions as incapable of providing a unifying core for society, Hegel's mature political thought is occupied with the vital function that new, modernized political institutions must play in giving a truly sustainable form to evolving social practices. For the Romantics, society is to be seen as 'organic,' while the modern state is 'mechanistic.' Further, because of the ontological nuance that they give these notions, the mechanism of the state cannot be reconciled with the organism of society, and can only act in a destructive manner upon it. For Hegel, on the contrary, society is mechanistic, since it is driven primarily by the engine of people's individual desires to fulfill their selves through participating in exchange, while the state represents at least the possibility of taking this 'mechanistic' substratum and giving it a form that is organic, i.e. a form of more pervasive integration and sustainable sovereign activity. Thus for Hegel, the notions of mechanism and organism are not irreconcilable antitheses, but two distinct organizational aspects of any social body that can and should coexist in a truly realized modern state.

It is of course overly simplistic to lump together Herder and the Romantic thinkers in this manner; indeed, even within the careers of individual Romantic thinkers, much work has been done to distinguish distinct political views at different phases. Thus my work here in this chapter will be focused primarily on explicating a certain strand of thought in Herder and the early writings of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis, and I will be emphasizing both continuity and a fundamental political distinction between Herder and the early Romantics. Herder argues that society must be understood as possessing a distinctly organic unity that the mechanisms of the modern

state tend to violate. My work on Herder will be focused on spelling out the meaning that these terms have in his thought. While the Romantics embrace this historicist model of society and criticize the same aspects of the modern state as Herder, they also seek to replace this mechanistic model with an alternative conception of political rule, which, as I will argue, Herder would not have endorsed. Unlike Herder, the early Romantics develop a communitarian defense of absolutist rule, and their model of the organic society is more prescriptive and hierarchical than Herder's.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT CONCEPTION OF THE STATE AS A MACHINE

While for Herder and the Romantics the conception of the state as a mechanism or machine is meant as an object of criticism, it is important to note that this same concept has a far more positive meaning in the writings of prior 18th century German political philosophers. Influential theorists such as A.L. Schlötzer and Christian Wolff use the metaphor of a machine to describe the relation of individuals to each other in a state.¹ These thinkers defend an enlightened conception of paternalism, in which the purpose of political rule is to insure the security and well-being of the ruled. They understand political bodies through the model of a social contract, in which independent individuals join together with each other in order to gain protection and engage in cooperative economic behavior. What makes the machine an apt metaphor for describing this kind of commonwealth? First, it expresses the belief that political bodies are artificial, that they do not express a natural social impulse on the part of humans. Second, the machine metaphor considers the components that are joined together in the commonwealth as brought together solely by means of a kind of external aggregation or a rational plan on the end-goal of their union, and it maintains this external mediation as the foundation for the state. Finally, it expresses the idea that order and not freedom is the real goal and legitimating factor of the commonwealth. Just as machines, and more generally, mechanical forms of production, had improved people's lives in so many ways, political theorists such as Wolff and Schlötzer had the belief that the state as such should best be thought of as a machine aimed at improving the security and well-being of the people who live under its rule.

In what follows, we will see that Herder uses this very model of the state as a machine as the basis for a critique of the modern, paternalistic practices that such theorists as Schlötzer and Wolff were trying to defend. It is important to note that in the works of these enlightenment theorists, the

figure of machine has an initially positive connotation, and it is not really conceived of as standing in opposition to an organism. For the enlightenment theorists it might be correct to say that the polar opposite of the machine is not organism, but chaos, i.e. a random, atomistic and uncooperative state of existence.² But in that even the absence of proper political rule is described in such atomistic terms, it is fair to say that there is no real theoretical alternative to mechanism, since even this atomistic state of nature is grasped through a fundamentally mechanistic schema of representation. It is this lack of conceptual alternative between the mechanism of the state and the mechanistic representation of pre-political human affairs that provokes Herder to propose an organic model of human culture as an alternative. But ultimately, Herder's program is motivated by his disagreement not just with the theoretical dichotomy of these social contract theorists, however, but more by his rejection of the political practices that he saw connected with such a theory: the paternalist rule of enlightened despotism and the colonial, expansionist politics of major states. His politics, it can be argued, is quite close to that of Rousseau, in his rejection of hierarchical models of political authority, his defense of local community against centralizing government, and his guiding notion that freedom and not security or happiness should be the ultimate measuring stick of political rule. But it must also be noted that Herder manages to support this kind of political program not through an alternative version of social contract theory, such as Rousseau's, but through a naturalist conception of cultural development, which he then turns against the practices of the states of his time.

HERDER'S ORGANIC CONCEPTION OF CULTURE

For Herder, the dominant strands of enlightenment political thought ask the wrong question and hence prescribe the wrong political goals. While much of enlightenment thought is concerned with discerning the right form of government, as if the people were merely a mass of material to be organized from without to attain prosperity and freedom, Herder believes it is far more important to look at the actual institutions and traditions in the lives of a people that allow them to exist together in a cohesive manner, and to elevate these traditions to the role of organizing a people's common existence. In this section, I will argue that Herder is not so much a reformer of the state, nor an inventor of the nation state, as a theorist who attempts to contrast starkly the organic element of culture to the mechanistic element of modern political bodies. For Herder, freedom lies on the side of the former, while hubristic and life-negating force lies on the side of the latter.

This will involve arguing that Herder's real positive contributions lie on the side of social philosophy, or of re-conceiving a doctrine of national sovereignty and personal freedom on the terrain of social philosophy, and that his contributions to political philosophy in the traditional sense are purely negative and critical. Such an interpretation will go against those readings of Herder that view him as a proponent of the newly developing nation state, but it will also undermine those readings that attempt to resituate him in the liberal, Republican tradition.³

From his early writings onward, Herder takes an interest in the problem of defining organism and mechanism in the broadest philosophical context. There are two distinct tendencies that emerge quite early in Herder's intellectual development: a dissatisfaction with mechanistic forms of explanation, in the broadest metaphysical sense, as well as a commitment to naturalistic explanation. At first, these might seem like opposing commitments, and the only way that Herder can be true to both is by pursuing a mode of naturalistic explanation distinct from that of mechanistic causality.⁴ Herder develops the solution by working out a notion of organic processes as distinct from mechanical ones. If Herder's writings on society provide a depth of conceptual richness lacking in many later organic models of society, then this is because Herder does not begin with a ready made notion of organism, but questions the meaning of organic phenomena on a profound level.

In his mature philosophy of history,⁵ Herder continues his project of developing a naturalistic explanation of society without reducing it to mechanical laws. His philosophy of history represents an attempt to locate organic laws that serve to explain historical developments. He deploys the model of organism on many different levels: individual actors, societies and the entirety of the history of the human species can all be considered as 'organisms,' as totalities that are organized and develop according to organic principles. Herder argues that humans are by nature social, that we do not simply enter into society in search of attaining certain already defined interests.⁶ Thus explaining the evolution of forms of society is not a matter of explaining how autonomous individuals interact and are organized by external forces or by the use of their reason, but a matter of explaining the development of social forms in terms of organic laws of growth. Before proceeding any further, I will explain in brief several of the organic laws that Herder uses to explain the genesis and development of culture.

Law One: Formation in Relation to Environment

Organisms can persist and develop only by interacting with their environment in a given way. Changes in the environment lead to changes in the

organism. Herder argues that this relation between environment and organism applies not just to physical qualities of organisms in general, but to intellectual and cultural aspects of human life. Each human culture is a result of the climate, the physical terrain of its land; its customs, language and mythic grasp of reality are the result of the conditions that its environment imposes upon it. One piece of land might be suited to hunting and gathering, another to cultivation of live stock and another to the development of agriculture. The form of subsistence of the culture then shapes its social form, the world view of the individuals in the culture. This law does not however imply a mere causal link between environment and organism; the organism interacts with the environment based on innate tendencies and then the environment shapes the form of this activity. Herder claims that ultimately a culture is affected as much by the 'inner spirit of the people' (*Genius des Volkes*) as by its environment.⁷

Law Two: Genetic Continuity between Individuals

Genetics implies that the distinct characteristics of an organism have at least some basis in the qualities of its parents and ancestors, that life only creates itself out of a pattern that is pre-given through prior development. Herder applies this model to the intellectual and political aspects of human culture as well. He emphasizes that all thought is shaped by the language that we inherit from our culture, and the concepts available to a culture are dictated by the sphere of action that the culture knows. He often cites the fact that a people that has never seen snow will have no word for it and will only vaguely grasp the concept of it. He describes the genetics of culture as operating through a two-fold process of "imitation and reception" (*Nachahmung und Aufnahme*). There must be an external precedence for me to imitate, but I must also possess within me the organic power to receive or take up the example.⁸ Herder does not deny the existence of individuals who produce innovative discoveries, but he argues that even such moments of innovation are only possible in and through the level attained by a culture.

Law Three: Teleological Relation between Individuals and Species

The actions of individual organisms cannot be explained purely through the drive to self-perpetuation, but involve some reference to continuing and improving the life of the species. For Herder, each culture represents an attempt to realize certain aspects of our species being, which he describes under the concept of humanity (*Humanität*).⁹ He sees mainly two ideals that make up our common humanity: love and religiosity. Each culture has religion and some form of love, but is limited in its expression of these ideals by

the circumstances, in some cases to such a degree that these ideals are stunted and perverted. Nevertheless, this notion of humanity allows Herder to view history as embodying progress towards a common ideal. But he does not see the development of history as linear and unimpeded. He also uses this model of humanity to explain why some developments, particularly those of modern Europe in the age of reason, represent stunted and undesirable forms of progress.¹⁰ Thus the model of teleology is more regulative than constitutive: Herder does not believe that progress towards humanity is inevitable and omnipresent, but he seems to argue that we must have the correct notion of human species-being in order to diagnose adequately the possibility or lack of progress.

Law Four: Subordination of Parts to Whole, Not to Other Parts

In an organism, each organ plays a function that is in some way subordinate to the life-function of the organism as a whole, but not simply subordinate to another part. In an organism, there is a division of functions, but no part stands as a mere means in relation to another part. This relation also describes Herder's stance towards the issue of social equality and his rejection of absolutism. For Herder, the problem with most governments is that the large mass of members of society are subordinated to the will of one person or one class, and so they are reduced to being mere means to the end of the governing part. Herder embraces a model of society, much like Rousseau's, in which no person is subordinated to the arbitrary will of another, but only to the social demands of the whole. While Herder does not support of democratic election of legislators, he rejects the notion that government be contained in the hands of a certain class through hereditary privilege. On this point it is crucial to note a distinction between Herder's model of organism and that of later Romantics: Herder's model of organism works in an egalitarian direction, by giving different organic functions equal priority in the whole, but the later Romantic model of organism subordinates the non-cognitive parts of the organism to the cognitive parts, and hence serves as a conceptual model for absolutism (more on this later). But Herder's very concept of organism precludes this hierarchical notion of organic functions, since he views 'mind' as a life force that pervades the whole organism, rather than being centered in one of the parts.¹¹

This conception of culture as an organism does not per-force entail a particular kind of political organization, either republican or otherwise. In my view, more than offering a political philosophy in his mature writings on history, Herder offers a social philosophy, a philosophy that describes the conditions under which humans live together and the laws relating to their

organization in society. He writes about forms of political organization just insofar as they emerge out of the social relations that he views to be natural, or insofar as they stifle this natural process of organization that Herder calls culture. (In his *Ideen*, Herder devotes only one short section, Book 9 Ch. 4, to forms of government, and he considers their development in an anthropological-historical context rather than a prescriptive one.) While Herder thinks that some form of governance (*Regierung*) is absolutely natural and indispensable to society, he criticizes several aspects of the modern state, in particular the institution of monarchy or hereditary authority, as well as the practice of colonialism.

On the basis of this particular understanding of what an organism is and how society can be understood as an organism, it will be possible to see how Herder questions both the theory and practice of paternalism by arguing that the modern state has been guilty of overstepping its bounds and stifling the natural organic process of culture. He often refers to the state as a machine, a mechanism. But in his usage of this figure, he is reversing the largely positive meaning that it had for the enlightenment thinkers mentioned in the previous section. While these earlier thinkers see the state's machine-like qualities as a positive contrast to the random mechanism of the pre-political state existence, Herder views these same machine-like aspects of the state as forces that threaten to undermine the organism of society, an organism in which humans can attain both happiness and freedom. Herder considers the paternalistic state to be machine-like in the three senses that I will enumerate below:

First, the modern state is machine-like in that it promotes one-sided, not comprehensive development of its citizens. In a section of the *Ideen* devoted to the subject of happiness, Herder develops a model of happiness that runs counter to the kind that was promoted by European states at his time. For Herder, true happiness comes from having the opportunity to develop all of one's human capacities in and through an activity that promotes their harmonious development. He sees it as the sickness of modern Western culture that the political hierarchy of authority and the social division of labor lead to a one-sided development of human capacities. Some end up resigned to engaging in physical labor with no creative or reflective capacity, while others have purely intellectual tasks. Although this one-sidedness might lead to superbly refined capacities, it does not lead to a truly fulfilling human life. Herder thinks that 'savage' cultures often surpass our own in allowing for the integral development of human potential. In the end Herder argues that the state is not capable of promoting happiness because happiness is a gift of nature, a product of freedom and not of regulation or calculation.

"Every human carries the measure of his happiness in himself; he carries the form with him, to which he can be transformed and in the boundaries of which he alone can be happy."¹² Happiness is possible without the state he argues, since many cultures have managed to live successfully without it: "It would be weak and childish on the part of the creative mother to have built the sole determination of her children, to be happy, upon the artificial cogs and wheels of a late-comer [the state] and await from its hands the goal of the earthly creation."¹³ Happiness must thus be thought of as the result of a process that is natural and innate to all human life, rather than as the result of an artificial regulation of human life through rational principles.

Second, the modern state is like a machine in that it stifles natural development of social relations by giving artificial status to certain classes (*Stände*). Herder follows the arguments of Rousseau's second *Discourse* in arguing that the form of political authority represented by the laws of the state only serves to perpetuate inequalities that would be much more fluid and inconsequential in other forms of society. Like Rousseau, he sees nothing natural in the hereditary passing down of the authority of the father to the son. He sees in such hereditary power a human artifice that perpetuates itself only through power, not through legitimate authority. He seems to argue for a meritocracy when he writes: "Nature does not distribute her gifts of nobility according to family."¹⁴ Further, he argues against the tendency of state politics to perpetuate the existence of certain classes and throw obstacles in the way of social mobility. In the following passage, he clearly rejects the justification of social stratification through natural right: "Everyone should be that which nature destined him to be. But as soon as the ruler wants to take the place of the creator and, from an arbitrary or biased will, create matters for himself, he will in fact make himself the father of the most heaven-defying despotism and disorder upon earth."¹⁵ In this passage he makes clear that the only 'natural' social order is one in which each individual is given the chance to develop his or her own capacities, and not hindered by class politics. Class politics, in the form of protecting property, assigning authority based on name, or political rights based on birth, are inherently 'mechanistic,' because they replace the natural, distinctive development of human capacities with an artificial order founded in positive law.

Third, and finally, the modern state brings together under common laws people who have different languages and customs. As previously argued, a culture for Herder is a result of a common past and a certain geographical situation. This common past expresses itself in a common language and mythology, as well as common customs and artistic traditions.¹⁶ Herder was critical of the states in his own day, such as Prussia and France, that sought

to unite diverse linguistic and cultural groups under a common rule, as well as of colonialist powers that sought to export their cultures around the globe. He calls these states 'state machines,' since they are the aggregation of parts through external force, rather than organic totalities, the result of growing together out of the teleology inherent in the parts. Members obey the laws of the land out of coercion, and not out of a living sense for the traditions that make up a part of their lives. To Herder, the problem in such political bodies is that they demand the subjects to give allegiance to a whole of which they are not properly speaking parts.

This model of mechanism is essentially intended to criticize both the dominant models of the state that existed in Herder's time as well as the actual practices of the major European states. The thrust of this concept of mechanism is to show that true freedom or self-activity is not possible in such a state, and hence Herder can be viewed as 'liberal' in a special sense: he makes freedom or autonomy into the highest good in his thinking about society, rather than happiness. But his model of freedom is starkly communitarian, since he views the self-activity of the individual as bound up with the organic relation of this individual to a functioning cultural body that has the right of kind of continuity. Thus one of the most basic conditions for the state is that it limit itself to being a 'nation-state' and does not attempt to unite or rule diverse nations. In this sense, I would argue that Herder takes up the problem of sovereignty so prevalent in the political philosophy of his century and transforms it from an issue of the *source of law* (as in Rousseau) into an issue of the *unity of culture*.

I have left the question intentionally open as to what kind of government Herder would support, and I would call attention to the fact that the conceptualization of the legislative and governmental action is rather underdeveloped in his thought, not because Herder's philosophy is simply apolitical, but because it wants to shift the problem of political philosophy away from context free arguments about law and forms of governance and towards the theme of culture and history. In a digression on Montesquieu's political philosophy, Herder makes it clear that political philosophy should confine itself to describing the ways in which diverse cultural circumstances give birth to different forms of government, rather than present rational arguments about the best form of government.¹⁷ This digression argues that government results out of a specific culture's demands, and that political philosophy should withhold itself from giving context-free, rational arguments about the superiority or inferiority of certain forms of government.

Herder makes it clear that all cultures need some form of 'government,' some positive laws above and beyond the force of traditions and

norms. He simply believes that the form of government should arise organically out of the conditions in the culture rather than be dictated in an abstract sense. Hence rather than classifying Herder as an anarchist, I believe it would be more appropriate to regard him as a critic of all context free arguments about the ideal form of government (a kind of argument presented even by anarchism).¹⁸

THE ORGANIC MODEL OF REPUBLIC IN SCHLEGEL AND NOVALIS

The two early Romantic philosophers Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis develop a more explicitly political philosophy than Herder, a philosophy that takes a more concretely prescriptive stance towards the notion of Republicanism and towards the functioning of political bodies. They take up Herder's notion that social freedom must be understood as an organic relation between individuals and their social tradition, but they use this thought in order to advance a new concept of Republicanism. In so doing, they see themselves as formulating a 'counterweight to the revolution,' not a mere conservative reaction to the French revolution, but a model of Republicanism that they think would avoid both the extremes of the revolutionary terror and the conservative status quo. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize the contrast to Herder: while Herder used his organic conception of cultural unity to critique the predominant models of the state, the Romantics increasingly make the state into the actual bearer of this form of unity.¹⁹

The notion of Republicanism prior to the Romantics, in Kant and Rousseau, is founded primarily on two factors: the sovereignty of the people to create its own laws and the separation of the legislative power from the power of government to enforce the laws. Novalis and Schlegel retain the word Republic, but they completely change its meaning. To them, political philosophy should not merely be a matter of describing the 'positive form' of government. They argue that the degree to which a state is despotic or Republican cannot be described in terms of the formal process that creates and enforces law, but can only be discerned in the relation that individuals feel in their daily life to the common will. Nevertheless, they try to formulate the institutional basis for such an organic society. Thus the political philosophy of Romanticism turns gradually towards a defense of a kind of spiritual absolutism in government, since the institution of monarchy is the aesthetic basis for the kind of organic society that the Romantics defend. In what follows, I will attempt to trace the early genesis of this thought.

i. Organism as a Transcendental Idea in Schlegel

The concept of organism is more concretely prescriptive in the political writings of the Romantics than it was in Herder. While Herder uses the conceptual schemas of organism and mechanism in order to describe different kinds of historical developments, and in order to diagnose a specific sickness in modernity, the Romantics transform the notion of organism into a 'regulative idea,' a model of freedom that is nowhere perfectly instantiated in experience, but can serve to guide theory and action in the right direction. The most explicit discussion of organism as such a regulative idea comes in Friedrich Schlegel's 'Lectures on Transcendental Philosophy' (1800), where he introduces the concept of organism in the context of a critique of the Kantian antinomy between mechanistic causality and the causality of the free will.²⁰ Although the discussion is not explicitly political, it comes as a digression in a lecture devoted to the true nature of a Republic and I believe it provides a deeper conceptual explanation of how both Schlegel and Novalis define the organic in the political writings I will be examining.

In part two of the lectures, Schlegel raises the question as to what principles can be used to describe the ideal form of society, the Republic, and he introduces the familiar principles of freedom and equality.²¹ However, Schlegel considers it to be a substantial obstacle to his account that the notion of freedom has hitherto been misconceived in the philosophy of his time. He argues against the Kantian notion of freedom as the absolute causal power of the will, and develops a lengthy critique of the third antinomy from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which freedom is defined in opposition to mechanism:

There are two concepts that stand in our way, about which we must first make ourselves clear if we want to understand our principles correctly. These concepts are the concepts of the *freedom of the will* and of the *lawfulness of nature*. It is not as if there is no truth to these concepts, but the form under which they are grasped is not correct and we will dispute it.²²

In what follows, Schlegel argues that the notion of freedom that results out of this antinomy leads to "tearing asunder the connection of the world and of the inner human as well," to a creation of two distinct worlds that operate on opposing principles, a chain of deterministic causal order and an absolute, but isolated, power to break this chain through free decision. But Schlegel faults not just the lack of coherence in this view of 'two worlds' but more that it gives a reductive concept of human freedom, calling this conception of freedom "the mechanism of consciousness."²³ Schlegel's goal is not to dispute

human agency, but to avoid reducing human agency to a mere psychological mechanism, and hence to provide a more adequate model of freedom:

Mechanism is indeed the evil principle in philosophy as well as reality. . . . But if one wanted to establish the good principle as freedom in opposition to this, then the manner of this opposition is not adequately characterized; namely if freedom is grasped only as a negation of mechanism.²⁴

Thus he faces the challenge of defining freedom not just as a negation of external causation, internal causation through concepts, but in a positive sense as a form of relation between free beings and their world. This leads Schlegel to the conclusion that the real conceptual alternative to mechanism lies not in the freedom of the will, but in the concept of organism, and he attempts to demonstrate how this concept can be understood as a transcendental idea, in the Kantian sense, as a regulative principle for grasping the ethical purpose of human life. "If one thinks nature as a mechanism, then nothing is left but an absolute faculty to depart from this mechanism. But it is the sole content of our philosophy that there is only one world and that it is organic."²⁵ But if the world is thought of as one organic whole, then what room does this leave for human agency? How can humans experience a possibility to change their world and improve themselves? Schlegel attempts to give an alternative experience of agency to that of the free will:

The causality of the whole cannot be thought but how those others might vaguely intuit; just not as the mechanism of our consciousness to absolute causality. It is solely through the *causality of love* that the capacity of causality can be attributed to humans. The world is still unperfected. Thus a beginning must always be made towards perfecting it. There must then be a causality in the whole that is connected with the whole . . . whosoever recognizes this principle and has become a creator out of it, will be able to make this primal fact comprehensible to himself.²⁶

Here Schlegel is describing a model of freedom in which we are free not through an isolated power that opposes us to the world outside of us, but through a sense of the power that binds us to this world. Freedom has to be thought through relation to the whole, rather than opposition to it. We are free insofar as we feel ourselves to be part of a whole that is organic, a whole that is bound together by a common teleology. Further, the passage makes

clear that Schlegel considers such freedom to be an 'idea' in the transcendental sense: it is not something that is realized in the world of experience, but a regulative ideal that we can only embody in our actions, and intuit as latent in the whole series of experience.²⁷ This discussion of freedom must, however, be taken in a political context, since it comes in the context of a discussion in which Schlegel is trying to critique not so much Kant's overall critical philosophy, as his and Rousseau's model of political Republicanism. In re-interpreting the notion of freedom in this organic way, Schlegel lays the basis for thinking of the 'Republic' not as a system of lawfully ordered individual pursuits, but as a communitarian instantiation of a properly organic relation between the individual and the cultural, social context of this individual's experience. For the Romantics, such a community is not a simple given, but an 'ideal' that can only be approximated through infinite striving. However, the Romantics don't leave it at this indeterminate ideal. The key to understanding how they reconcile this organic ideal with political practice lies in their aesthetic theory.

ii. The Idea of Republicanism in Schlegel

On the basis of this notion of freedom as organism, it will be possible to read Schlegel's early political writings, *Über die Grenzen des Schönen* (1794) and *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus* (1796),²⁸ as attempts to fill in this regulative ideal with a concrete political prescription. One of Schlegel's foremost contributions to the Romantic movement is his notion that the role of art is to represent the infinite, the unrealizable and un-representable ideals, in the medium of sensuous experience. These early writings on Republicanism represent an attempt to make this insight fruitful for politics. If the organic society is a practical idea of the kind described above, then the only way that politics can actually promote the realization of this idea is by working on the subjectivity of the citizen in much the same way as an art work affects the aesthetic subject.

In the secondary literature, there is quite a bit of material on the political meaning of Schlegel's 'republicanism.' What seems to be at stake in these debates is whether early German Romanticism can be considered, at least in its founding moments, as an off-shoot of the liberal tradition. A common reading of the subject interprets the early Schlegel (up to 1796) as a defender of a democratic republic, but then growing more skeptical of these ideals over the course of the 1790's and eventually giving them up for a defense of monarchy and aristocratic rule.²⁹ Although Schlegel did become more conservative on several accounts during this time, I believe that this reading of Schlegel confuses what is really at stake in his Republicanism. In my view,

even his earliest writings on the notion of Republicanism involve a considerable break with the liberal conception of a Republic, and his subsequent writings remain largely consistent with his early definition of a Republic, simply tracing the implications of his original definition.³⁰

The two great Republican philosophers in the liberal tradition, Rousseau and Kant, define a Republic, in much the same way, as a form of government where there is popular sovereignty in the creation of laws and a separation of powers between the power that creates laws and the power that enforces them. Both Kant and Rousseau consider such a government to be a form of political organization that can be expressed through a constitution. Schlegel rejects the notion that a Republic can merely be defined as a form of constitution, and instead defines it as a transcendental idea to which various forms of government approximate to varying degrees under differing cultural circumstances.³¹ In his 1796 essay, he argues that neither a democracy nor a monarchy has a monopoly on the Republican ideal, and he also dismisses the importance of a separation of powers. The decisive factor in whether a society is Republican or despotic is the public morality, and the form of government that best enables a people to approach this idea depends on the cultural circumstances. Thus in my view the debate about what form of government Schlegel supported at various phases in his career ignores his more central insight regarding the relativity of all forms of legislation and his consistent attempt to place the notion of Republicanism on a new foundation.

For Schlegel, the concept of Republic is first and foremost a regulative idea: a society in which the people are governed by the universal will. Such a universal will can never be given in experience, precisely because our experience in society is confined to ourselves and others who are particular wills. Because of the inevitable gap between the factual conditions of society and the idea of republic, a society can only approximate this idea through a 'fiction,' as Schlegel writes: since the universal will is not an empirical given like the particular will, society must find some particular body that it imbues with the fictional status of embodying this universal will. This body remains a particular will, whether it is a single person or a group of people, but it acts 'as if' it were truly the binding universal will of the people.

Thus government is for Schlegel a necessary fiction, and the study of forms of government is a study of the adequacy with which various forms of rule manage to represent the idea of Republic. Throughout his writings, Schlegel entertains the applicability of various forms in which this fiction might work: majority rule, oligarchy, a monarch who represents the will of the people. In the 1796 essay it is hard to make out a preference for one form of fiction over the others. At one point the essay argues that the only

adequate form of 'fiction' can be arrived at through democratic election (i.e. what the majority chooses is not truly the universal will, but the best possible approximation to it). But later in the very same essay, he argues that a monarch is needed to 'promote' the Republican ideal in citizens that are not yet able to grasp it,³² an argument that becomes more prominent in subsequent years in both Schlegel and Novalis. What underlies this seeming inconsistency is the notion that different cultural circumstances require different forms of 'fiction' in order best to promote progress towards the ideal of a Republic: a democratic election would be the best form of fiction in a society where individuals are fully enlightened and capable of recognizing their universal interests, but a monarch is in most cases indispensable for giving the people a sensible representation of the 'idea' of their universal will. While Schlegel might have emphasized the latter side of this argument more in his later writings, his 1796 essay already concedes a formidable role to the monarchy. Even at this early phase Schlegel's writings, this argument can be taken as a rather strong prescription for a strong authority for the monarch, since at any given age, especially the time when Schlegel was writing this essay, the formation of a people's consciousness will inevitably be incomplete. Further, it should be noted what specific role this argument gives to the monarch: the monarch is to serve not so much as an actual force of public education (as in models of enlightened despotism) but rather as an aesthetic representation of the universal will, a symbol of the not yet realized, and never fully realizable impulse towards community. This specific argument will be spelled out much more clearly in Novalis' writings on the role of the monarch.

The notion of 'representation' plays a vital role throughout the political thought of Schlegel, as well as Novalis, but here too we must see this not as a manifestation of his liberal impulse, but as an attempt to change the meaning of one of the foundational concepts of liberal political thought. For Schlegel, the role of the representative is not to represent the particular will of the people in a public assembly (he calls such representatives mere deputies), but to represent the idea of universality to the people.³³ Rather than standing for the factual wishes of the people, the representative has the task of mediating between the unattainable 'idea' of a society's common interest and the citizen's limited consciousness. This notion of representation is certainly grounded in romantic aesthetics, which puts emphasis on the need for art to represent the infinite within finite experience, to make 'ideas' accessible to sensible consciousness. The statesman is viewed as an artist in this sense, faced with the task of changing the consciousness of individuals by appealing to their imaginations. The prime task of the representative is not to create laws that express the will of the people, but to create this will as a

unitary whole for the first time, or at least to present such a will as a fictional representation that guides the people.

As I argued in the previous section, Schlegel conceives of the notion of organism as a transcendental idea regulating the relation of individuals to a greater whole that is bound together by a common teleology. Schlegel demonstrates a historicist's suspicion, not unlike Herder's, that the action of this regulative ideal cannot be captured by one ideal form of government. But unlike Herder, Schlegel does believe that this principle of organic unity must be represented to the people in the form of a higher authority. For Herder organism was simply present in the practices of a culture when studied in their proper context, but for Schlegel this unity is projected into the realm of regulative ideals that cannot be deemed as truly existing within any society, but may merely be used as a schema to justify a form of governance. With his argument about the nature of organism as a fiction that must be represented by a ruler, Schlegel provides one of the key conceptual components for the later Romantic defense of the Restorationist ideal in politics.

iii. Novalis' Mythic-Organic Republicanism

One of Novalis' most important political texts, *Glauben und Liebe*, demonstrates how Schlegel's notion of organism, and in particular his conception of political representation, can be turned into a far stronger defense of the political role of monarchy. Novalis intended the text as an open letter written to the new King of Prussia, Friedrich Willhelm III, attempting to justify the political function of the monarch. Other writings from around the same time demonstrate that Novalis did not particularly prefer monarchy to other forms of republicanism, but saw it as a means among others for promoting admirable political ideals.³⁴ It can be argued that in the author's best intentions, the text is an attempt to dissuade Friedrich III from following the paternalism of his predecessor, Friedrich II, and to earn allegiance from the people based on their moral respect rather than serving their self-interest. But in the course of formulating such a program, Novalis gives form to some of the ideas that would be foundational for later Romantic political philosophers, such as Adam Müller. The text develops the organic model of society to the point where the organism is thought of as a hierarchical system of organization. Further, it presents a model of monarchy in which the role of the monarch is not that of an enlightened despot, who guides society to its own enlightenment, but rather that of an artist, who conveys a kind of 'fiction' of society as a community, and in so doing raises society above the atomistic nature of modern civil society.

Like Schlegel, Novalis argues that the true measure of a Republic consists in the lived relation of the citizens to the idea of the whole in which they live.³⁵ The unity that a law craves is merely coercive. The state bound together by a constitution rests on intellectual agreement, but for Novalis such a form of unity only appeals to an isolated part of the human being. He accuses enlightenment philosophers of ignoring the comprehensive human being, the need to satisfy the senses as much as the intellect. The unifying factor must be a sensual one, a comprehensive human embodiment of the morals that make a common identity possible. For Novalis, the best such mediating factor for the idea of the republic is a monarch, since, he argues, an actual human being rather than an institution or a set of procedures is the most adequate symbol of the people's universal interest. While the institution might satisfy our intellect, it leaves our imagination cold. A living, breathing human being on the other hand provides us with a symbol that we can more intuitively embrace as standing in relation to our own existence. More important to the reality of the republic than the people's intellectual grasp of the law, or their role in creating it, is their inner sympathy for the one who represents it. The concepts of Republic and monarch are not only reconcilable, but presuppose one another, like body and soul.³⁶ "A true royal pair is for the whole human being what a constitution is for the mere intellect. . . . What is a law, if it is not taken as the expression of a beloved will?"³⁷ The decisive advantage of the royal couple is that they appeal to the citizen as an entire human being, not merely as a rational agent.

Novalis regards the king as a representative of the people in the same sense as Schlegel uses the concept of representation. He writes: "The whole state boils down to representation. All of representation boils down to making present what is not present. (The magical powers of fiction.) My faith and love rests upon a faith in representation."³⁸ Throughout *Glauben und Liebe* Novalis gives many examples of how this representation takes place: the ceremoniousness of the court, the image of domestic discipline in a not overly decadent court life and the virtue of the queen are each symbols of the morality that should bind people in a common will. In each case, Novalis views the value of the symbol as consisting in its function as a mediating factor between the individual and the public morality that makes social life possible.

Although Novalis believes that the monarchy should be hereditary, he also argues for a kind of free relation between the citizen and their mediating factor to the universal will. If the king and queen are not morally convincing, if they do not make the idea of a universal will alive through their actions, then the citizens cannot help but withhold their allegiance.

(Thus he believes that the revolution in France was a mere expression of the fact that the royal family had for a long time failed in its true task.) In Novalis' theory of religion he develops a politically relevant argument about the freedom of individuals in relation to their mediating symbols: "Nothing is for true religiosity more crucial than a mediating factor (*ein Mittelglied*) that connects us to divinity. . . . But in his choice of this mediating factor, a human being must be completely free. The slightest compulsion ruins his religion."³⁹ This same element of freedom could be applied to the relation between citizen and monarch (assuming that his theory of political representation and of religious mediation are based on a similar conception of mediation between human subjectivity and ideas). The monarch's title is founded in his mission to convey the idea of the republic: the governance of the people through their universal will. As soon as the spirit of his rule lacks the correct moral example, his power has already disappeared, and his hold over people is insured at most through natural force, not through his hold on people's hearts and minds.

Novalis critiques the way in which many enlightenment thinkers tried to justify the institution of monarchy, namely a paternalistic conception of the relation between monarch and subjects. According to this theory the monarch deserves the allegiance of the people to the degree that he serves to promote their material interests. For Novalis the self-interest of the citizens is not an adequate measure of the force that binds them in society. The universal will that makes up the idea of Republicanism cannot be reduced to the mean of people's individual desires. Novalis calls this paternalistic model of society 'machine-like' and he sees the rule of Friedrich II as the epitome of such a machine like rule (Friedrich II introduced many new regulatory aspects to the Prussian state, such as demographic studies, public health measures and agricultural reforms). Such a form of rule is mechanistic to the degree that it takes people as entering into society to meet their physical needs. In so doing it assumes that these citizens would not through their own spontaneous social activity organize themselves into the kind of activity that serves to satisfy these needs. Thus it conceives of the individuals as 'atoms' of self-interested energy that are to be directed and managed through the organizational power of the state.

But Novalis argues that the role of the king should not be to give people what they think they want, but to elevate and give measure to their desires. For Novalis the paternalistic practices of monarchs are ultimately to blame for the French revolution: by giving people the sense that their mission was founded in their service to people's material interests, rulers opened up a desire that could never be satisfied, since the desire for material

prosperity knows no borders. A real political union cannot be founded on such an insatiable principle, but must be founded on moral respect between the king and the people. He criticizes the French king who made it his goal to make the land so prosperous that every peasant family could have a chicken on its table for Sunday dinner, asking: "Wouldn't the government be favorable under which a peasant would rather eat a piece of moldy bread than have a roast in another (state) and would thank God for his luck to be born in this state?"⁴⁰

It might be argued that Novalis is justifying the kind of despotism that keeps peasants poor and uses religion as an opiate. But taken in a more generous interpretation, he is simply arguing against the notion that political activity should be directed primarily towards the end of promoting material well being. Like Herder he believes that happiness should result from an organic process, that is to say, that economies are self-organizing social aspects of a people living together, and cannot be dictated from above through state intervention. Novalis has a series of aphorisms where he uses organic metaphors to describe the economic processes of a state: in a play on words between the Greek for oxygen and for happiness, he writes that the state should prefer the 'oxygen' produced through plant respiration to that produced by chemical artifice.⁴¹ In another aphorism he calls gold and silver the life blood of the state, and the healthy state is one where there is an unimpeded flow in both directions, between citizen and state, also between state and citizen. Each of these aphorisms considers the economic development of the state as an organic process produced by a teleology inherent to the parts, not a result of governmental planning. The political, or the force that binds people together, should be a force that gives measure to desires rather than merely appealing to desires. The goal of the political leader is more cultural and symbolic than economic, in that this ruler gives the diverse components of society the sense that they belong to a whole with a common cultural head. Thus the king has the role of promoting the arts, as a measured and emotionally significant form of materialism, and of demonstrating to the public a scrupulously managed household in the case of his own court. But with this we can already measure the gap between Herder's model of culture and that of Novalis: for Herder, culture is a many pointed process that evolves out of the interactions of people over time, while for Novalis, the unity of culture presupposes a political hierarchy, at least in a symbolic sense, in order to give it its measure and keep the individuals from devolving into formless activity.

The most significant transformation that the concept of organism undergoes in early Romanticism is that it takes on a hierarchical meaning that it did not have for Herder. For Herder the very teleology that makes

up an organism precludes the possibility for one part to be subordinated to another. His model of organism denies the dualism of mind and body, making mind into a pervasive power that enlivens all parts of the organism, and so when this notion of organism is used as a metaphor for society, it serves to dissolve the distinction between the ruler and the ruled. But Novalis, in his appeal to the organic aspects of society, compares the various parts of society to the faculties of a human being, and these faculties clearly stand in relations of authority and subordination to one another: "The State has always been a macro-anthropos: the guilds were its limbs and physical energies, the estates its spiritual faculties. The nobility represented the moral faculty, the priests the religious faculty, the scholars the intellectual faculty whilst the king embodied the power of the will."⁴² In fact, Novalis' conception of society is heavily imbued with the notion that obedience to spiritual authority is the source of all proper social cohesion. With this faculty oriented conception of organism, Novalis paves the way for later Romantics, such as Adam Müller, who use the thought of organism to justify the factual inequalities between the ruler and the ruled that have arisen through history.⁴³

In closing, a final comparison can be drawn between Herder and Schlegel and Novalis. In Herder, the notion of organism is primarily descriptive and not prescriptive. Herder uses the notion of organism in order to present a model of what any culture always already is if it is not stifled from the top. Thus when Herder wants to establish his own political points, he does so through diagnosing the modern state as mechanistic, not through demanding an alternative model of the state qua organism. For the Romantics, however, the concept of organic communitarianism takes on a more prescriptive sense, as a missing, perhaps never fully attainable ideal that must be promoted through the revitalization of the spiritual influence of a statesman who understands the aesthetic, symbolic act involved in acting as a ruler. On the other hand, the figure of organism goes from a radically egalitarian meaning in Herder to a more hierarchical one in the works of Novalis. For Herder, the notion of an organism precludes a subordination of any one part to another, and presupposes a common teleology for all of the parts. But for Novalis, this common teleology presupposes some guiding spiritual force that integrates the individuals into a common whole. In later Romanticism, this thought would then develop into a notion of organism as a system of stratification, i.e. a thoroughly hierarchical society in which the 'hands' and the 'heart' follow the 'head.' It seems however that rather than describing a radical distinction between the liberal program of early Romanticism and the conservatism of later Romantics (as some defenders of Romanticism have attempted), it is important to note that the fundamental distinction in the

meaning of organism takes place between Herder and the early Romantics: while Herder locates the organic aspect of society in the set of cultural practices that naturally unify a people, the Romantics, perhaps sensing that such a concept of society is no longer applicable to modern Europe, strive to associate this organic aspect of society with a concrete political figure who can act as the bearer of cultural unity. With this conceptual transformation, the Romantics break with the egalitarian, anti-imperialistic politics that motivated Herder, and they pave the way for a notion of community that serves the goals of restoration.

Chapter Two

The Political Function of Machine Metaphors in Hegel's Early Writings

In one of the most famous texts from Hegel's Frankfurt era, *The Oldest System Program of German Idealism*, he seems to repeat the Romantic critique of the state as a machine:

Advancing towards the idea of humanity, I want to show that there is no idea of the state, since the state is something mechanical, just as little as there is an idea of a machine. Only what is an object of freedom can be called an idea. Thus we must go beyond the state!—For every state must treat free humans as mechanical wheels and cogs; and it should not do so; thus it should perish.¹

This passage has long served as a point of support for those who would like to distinguish between the revolutionary leanings of the early Hegel and the later Hegel's defense of the role of the state. Further, it seems to suggest that the early Hegel, like the early German Romantics, embraces an organic model of society, in which freedom is made possible through the organic bonds of cultural unity, while the project of legislation and state regulation merely serves to destroy this freedom.² However, it is my argument that this simple equation of Hegel's critique of the state in this period with the Romantic position obscures far deeper differences regarding the nature of Hegel's early political commitments. A closer look at Hegel's use of machine metaphors in his pre-systematic writings, those prior to his move to Jena in 1800, will reveal the crucial role that this figure plays in his early attempt to diagnose the relation between religious alienation and political oppression.

Hegel makes frequent use of machine and mechanism metaphors in his pre-systematic writings. I will demonstrate, on the one hand, that Hegel critiques certain forms of religion as machine-like in order to reveal the way in

which such religious practices precipitate political alienation. Then, departing from this, I will also argue that Hegel, like Herder and the Romantics, critiques the modern state as mechanistic (and the aspects of the state that he criticizes are even quite similar). But unlike his contemporaries, Hegel opposes the mechanism of the modern state not to the organic factors of culture, language, etc, but to the political virtues of antiquity.³ Hegel's real problem with the modern state is not that it lacks unity, but that it embodies the wrong kind of unity. Hegel claims in *Die Verfassung Deutschlands* (1800) that the central role of a political body is the defense of its members from foreign invaders, an ability sorely lacking in the Germany of his time. He argues elsewhere throughout this era that the founding virtues of the Greek *polis* were the courage of the aristocrats and their willingness to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their *polis*. These virtues express the organic nature of the Greek *polis*, in that they demonstrate a form of social cohesion in which the parts are bound to the whole not out of private interest, but because they are animated by a common teleology. Hegel's critique of the modern state as a machine is thus not a simple defense of the historically embedded traditions that tie a people together, but rather an attempt to distinguish the kind of unity that emerges through private interest in civil society from the kind of unity that emerges through a living sense on the part of citizens that the state is an embodiment of their own selves.

Thus the machine metaphors have primarily two usages in these early writings: as metaphors of a subjective attitude created by mindless religious practice, and as metaphors of political institutions. But behind these distinct usages lies a common concern: a lamentation over the loss of political virtues that make possible an 'organic' political body. There is much in this development that must be kept separate from Hegel's later political theory, especially his idealization of Greek political virtue, his lamentation of the effect of unfettered self-interest on the organism of the state, and in general his favoring of communitarian ideals in opposition to bourgeois aspects of modernity. But there are also certain core insights developed here that already separate Hegel's political thought from that of other German philosophers who condemned the modern state as a mechanism. In particular, I will argue that Hegel's occupation with the theme of mechanism in this era belongs to his attempt to think through a conception of political agency that could be relevant to modern times.

MECHANISM IN RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

In a fragment dated to 1793 titled "Religion is one of the most important occasions . . ."⁴ Hegel presents an account of the manners in which religious

practices have a positive or negative influence on the moral development of a people. Much of the focus here is not on the theological doctrine of a religion, but on its 'sensible' component, the style of sermons, the manner of praying, celebrating festivals, etc. Like Kant, Hegel is committed to a religion that is consistent with the parameters of pure reason and that promotes political and moral autonomy. But Hegel's concern with religion is motivated by skepticism that the Kantian moral doctrine, with its categorical imperative, is not able to motivate people to pursue moral ends, since in prescribing these ends, his doctrine is not able to reconcile these aims with the underlying sensual interests of the subject. Thus Hegel's interest in *Volksreligion* is really motivated by a concern over how the sensible, which is to say, ritualistic practices of a religion, bear a relation to the promotion of political autonomy. He argues that "sensibility can only be worked on by sensibility,"⁵ and that the very manner in which a religious practice arouses sensations in the practitioners can be more or less rational.

For Hegel the sensible component of modern Christianity is essentially that of a 'mechanism.' He uses the figure of mechanism here to describe the notion of a repetitive action in which all spontaneous self-awareness is eliminated.⁶ In this text, the habitual element of religious practice is accused of robbing religious practice of its power to truly influence the character of its practitioners. Hegel writes:

The necessary characteristics of the ceremonies of a folk religion are: a) above all, that they as little as possible become the inducement to fetishistic worship, that they are not designed to remain the mere work of mechanism—and devoid of spirit—their aim alone must be to intensify devotion and holy feeling.⁷

For Hegel what makes a habit mechanical is the fact that it allows one to act in such a way that the mind does not confront the inner meaning of the action. When studying Latin vocabulary, one runs through various declensions without thinking of the meaning of the word; one repeats a prayer without actually thinking of God or of the meaning of the prayer. Later in life, as a teacher at the Nuremberg Gymnasium, Hegel was not reluctant to incorporate such habitual techniques into his lesson plan and even praise them as a component of pedagogy. But as a young idealist meditating on the best means for changing human society, Hegel views this aspect of religion as an obstacle to the full realization of the power of religion to elevate people's moral sentiments.

In another passage from this essay, Hegel uses the metaphor of a machine to describe the type of human character that is so set in its ways

that it is not capable of being affected by any moral teaching: "Some ears are deaf against the voice of duty—it is no use to awaken their conscience to the inner judge that sits in their heart—into them no voice may penetrate. Self-interest (*Eigennutz*) is the pendulum that swings and so keeps their machine running."⁸ This passage establishes a link between the theme of religious repetition and a greater problem in this era of Hegel's thought, that of blind self-interest and lack of political consciousness in modern culture. It will become clear in looking at the more explicitly political texts from this era that the problem of habitual or mind-numbing religion is tied to the rise of self-interest that Hegel describes as coinciding with the decline of the ancient world. For the moment we can claim that the mechanism of habit is the enemy of true religion in these passages, and Hegel's problem is not that of distinguishing good habits from bad ones, but that of distinguishing irrational practices that dull the character and make it unreceptive to moral insight from those that might induce the sensible person to a rational morality.

In this text Hegel distinguishes between the objective component of religion and the subjective component of religion. The objective component includes the official doctrines as well as the rites, while the subjective contains the ability of the individual to have religious feelings in such a way that they bear an influence on one's actions outside of the sphere of religious practice. If the mechanism is characterized by a 'lack of penetration' between thought and action, then in the sphere of religion, the mechanism will lead to a form of religion in which there is no consistent integration between objective religion and subjective religion: a society's religious beliefs and practices will not have any impact on the real moral tenor of that society. But Hegel considers not just the element of habit in religion to be 'mechanistic.' Religious 'beliefs' or doctrines can also be mechanical to the degree that they are not combined with practical wisdom.⁹ In light of these diverse uses of machine metaphors to describe both belief without natural action and habits without corresponding meditation, we could integrate both with the claim that, in this essay, the figure of mechanism simply stands for a form of objectivity in which subjectivity is not integrally included, hence an 'alienated' form of action.¹⁰ To such an un-integrated relation between subjectivity and objectivity, Hegel opposes a "living band" in which religion, political constitution and ethical character all work together in a consistent way:

The spirit of a people, religion, degree of political freedom cannot be considered separately from one another, either in terms of their influence on each other or their manner of construction—they are woven into a living band. . . . The father of this spirit is Chronos (i.e. the spirit

of the time), his mother in whose womb he is born the *politeia*, the constitution, his care taker, wet nurse is religion, his tutor the fine arts . . . his nature is not merely spiritual, this band is woven together out of the thousand strands of nature.¹¹

The text makes clear the relation between mechanistic or organic forms of religious practice and the larger issue of mechanistic or organic social and political bodies, since this passage views religion as interwoven in a total process that could be called society or culture. The purpose of religion in this organic process is that of 'wet-nurse,' while the political constitution is that of 'father' and the community is that of 'mother.' In other words, the social role of religion is that of fostering the immature subjectivity, the sensual motivations and habits, of citizens in a way that is conducive to the political freedom of the citizens. It does so by using the medium of sensible conveyance in order to suggest political virtues that are founded in a kind of freedom in which the subject is not bound by sensible impulses. But freedom here means: the sense of belonging that each individual has within a self-sustaining political body.¹² When the political constitution becomes warped and unable to promote such freedom, so too must the nature of religion alter to that of mere blinding ceremony. True religion speaks to the senses in order to lift the subject beyond the sensible inclinations, while false religion speaks to the senses in such a way as to eliminate the very possibility of autonomous spiritual activity.

This essay, with its comparison of the mechanistic aspect of modernity to the organic unity of the ancient Greek city-state, makes clear the manner in which Hegel opposes the mechanistic aspect of modern religious culture to the organic unity of the ancient Greek community: the distinction between these two forms of organization can be characterized in the way that each of the parts relates to the whole. In the organic unity of Greek culture, there is a pervasive common teleology that binds a people together, and every cultural institution serves as a means for becoming conscious of this unity. In modern culture, the relation of people to the whole is essentially one of self-interest and market interaction, and religious practice simply serves as a way of removing people's consciousness from the actual act of common, social mediation.

The texts of the Bern and Frankfurt period continue to consider religion from the perspective established in this passage. During the Bern period Hegel employs the term 'positivity' in order to describe a situation in which what he previously called the 'objective' aspect of religion takes over and stands in a non-congruent relation to the subjective aspect. He develops a

critique of early Judaism as a religion that is bound to ritualistic practice and blind obedience to moral commandments,¹³ but he also argues that Christianity, after a first attempt by Christ and the early Christians to reverse this positivity, only falls victim to it again over the course of European history. In the following passage from a Bern fragment (1795), Hegel describes this transformation within the nature of Christianity. This passage is interesting both for its employment of the figure of mechanism and for its relating of religious alienation to political despotism:

The first Christians found comfort and hope in their religion for future rewards for themselves and punishment of their enemies . . . but the subordinate of a monastery or in general the subordinate of a despotic state cannot call on his religion to take revenge against a prelate that wastes the sweat of the poor or against a tax collector, since they too hear the same masses and read the same holy text, etc.—but he has found so much comfort and reparation for the loss of his human rights in a mechanical religion that in his animality he has forgotten his sense of humanity.¹⁴

When Christianity goes from being an otherworldly hope of those who stand on the outside of society and becomes an established religion shared by the powerful and the weak, it necessarily loses any hope of changing the power relations to the favor of the oppressed. Instead of bestowing hope to the oppressed, it offers them comfort through the leveling aspect of ritual: insofar as the ritual takes all subjectivity out of the practitioners, it offers them a perverse replacement for the actual kingdom of right.¹⁵ Christianity passes from a subjective demand for justice to an objective manifestation of equality that in fact leaves all possible room for exploitation and despotism. The figure of mechanism ('mechanical religion') implies here not only the ritual devoid of thought, but also the social practice devoid of conscious power relation, the leveling that conceals difference. Thus again we see that Hegel's critique of the subjective attitude inspired by modern religious practice implicitly relates to a conception of political agency that is largely informed by his idealization of the Greek *polis*.

THE MODERN STATE AS MECHANISM

In this Bern period Hegel treats the rise of alienation in Western culture not only through the transformation of Christianity from a private to a public religion, but also through the parallel decline in ancient Greco-Roman

civilization. If Hegel (in this era) supports the Greek *polis* as the highest form of human ethical life and as a still relevant political ideal, then it falls upon him to explain its decline. The later Hegel will explain this decline (in a manner that does not idealize ancient civilization) through the rise of civil society and the inability of ancient ethical life to contain this increasing element of self-interest. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel considers it the weakness and not the strength of ancient culture that it was unable to tolerate the rising factor of self-interest and had to perish through this unethical element. In a fragment from the Bern period titled “*Every People . . .*”¹⁶ Hegel gives a description of the rise of selfishness as the grounds for decline in ancient culture, without however demonstrating any similar critical grasp of the ancient world. The section deserves attention here due to the fact that in this early description of the rise of self-interest, Hegel employs a developed opposition between teleology and mechanism.

The image of the state as a product of his own action disappeared out of the soul of the citizen; the concern, the oversight over the entirety rested in the soul of a single individual or of some few, each had his own place, more or less limited by the others, prescribed to him, the state machinery was entrusted to a small number of citizens, and they operated merely like individual cogs and wheels that first gain their worth in contact with others. . . . All action, all goals were related now to the individual, no action any more for the entirety, for an idea—either each worked for himself or was forced to work for another. The freedom to obey self-given laws, to listen to self-chosen superiors and leaders, to follow plans constructed in cooperation, fell away; all political freedom fell away.¹⁷

The healthy ancient state followed a teleology in which each citizen saw his place in the whole, perceived the state as an extension of his own life, found his fulfillment in belonging to this larger organism. Conceptually speaking, such an entirety embodies the ‘inner teleology’ that Kant used to describe the organism.¹⁸ In such an ethical bond, Hegel writes, the individual has no need for individual immortality, since the on-going life of the state-organism to which he belongs gives him a true image of eternity. This passage demonstrates the particular way in which Hegel connects the political virtues of courage and self-sacrifice to an ethics of autonomy: in that the members of a organism perceive the whole as an extension of their own autonomy, the sacrifice of the self to this whole is an act of self-expression in a more complete way than the atomistic self-interests of modern individuals. In opposition

to such a vision of 'inner teleology,' Hegel constructs in the above passage an image of a 'state machine' in which the individual parts function blindly in the service of a goal that is different than their own. They each operate according to their own self-interest (which in a previously cited passage Hegel calls a 'machine'), and the entire organization of these self interests is not visible to the members therein, at most to a few state technicians. In that the parts of the whole are not able to posit their relation to the whole as a product of their own activity, their bourgeois freedom within this system represents a lack of true self-determination.

The later Hegel will see the rise of this individualistic consciousness as a historical necessity, in that it allows for the realization of the idea of freedom on a more broad foundation, and he will praise in Christianity and in the modern state the forces that are able to recognize this individual and build a new ethical order on the basis of his actions. But for the Hegel who writes this present passage, the rise of individuality is merely a symptom of a loss of freedom. The individualism that arises in this era of decline of ancient civilization contradicts the possibility of true freedom to the very degree that it is inherently mechanistic: because the individual does not act as part of a whole in which he experiences a reflection of himself at work, he is doomed to be subordinated to a process that eludes his subjectivity. His striving for independence is not a sign of freedom, but of his real dependence.

At this point, it seems necessary to be more specific about what I have been calling up to now Hegel's conception of political virtue, and how Hegel turns this conception against modern political bodies. To what degree is this conception of political virtue rooted in a contrast between the ancient and the modern world? What conception of modern society and the modern state informs Hegel's idealization of the ancient *polis*?

In a group of fragments that he wrote between 1795 and 1798, "Fragments of historical and political studies,"¹⁹ Hegel develops a general contrast between ancient and modern society and shows an increasingly critical impulse towards the modern state of the time. In one fragment, Hegel approaches the structure of modern society through a critique of the manner of its historical narratives, particularly a critique of the historical writings of David Hume. He finds in Hume's method of description a method that is characteristic of modern history itself, which is to say, not merely a mistaken form of narrative, but, broadly speaking, a metaphysics of events and their development that betrays the mechanistic principle of the modern state. In Hume's historical writing, political developments are seen as evolutions in legal forms that simply pull along the individual actors in history, not as a result of human actions. Hegel writes:

The work is not done as a deed, but only as a thought result. The consciousness of the deed as a whole is in no single actor. The history writer recognizes it as a result, and is in passing attentive to what this deed brings about. The only people who could be seen as actors are the ones who give commands or have influence on the commands, the rest simply contribute to the ordering of the whole. Because everything is ordered and the violence of order reigns, most only emerge as machine wheels (*Machinenräder*). The living aspect, the adaptation in the organization of it, is minimal, gradual and invisible.²⁰

Political history becomes a history of legislation, rather than a narration of human deeds that arise out of impassioned motivations (as was the history of ancient Greek historians). To this degree, such a history is 'mechanical,' as is the state that emerges from such a development. It is clear in the passage that Hegel is criticizing not simply an incorrect method of description (i.e. a description that doesn't match the facts), but a manner of linking events and figures that correctly describes reality, but which is metaphysically problematic for this very reason. Thus we see in this passage Hegel's identification of the mechanistic and the organic as two distinct metaphysical conceptions of human history or of political bodies: the organic identifies deeds as the result of the human passions, as the result of a process in which the individual actors are participants down to the most minute level (the passion of the leader enflames the passion of the citizens), while the mechanical views the individuals as the result of a process of ordering that is foreign to them and to which they are docile. Action or subjectivity is only present on the level of 'commands' or legislation.

Hegel's identification of the modern state with a machine continues into his Frankfurt years. In 1796, around the time of his move to Frankfurt, Hegel either transcribed or wrote a text today known as *The Oldest System Program of German Idealism*. Though the authorship of the text is still being debated (alternatively subscribed to Schelling, Hölderlin and Hegel), the present chapter cannot omit a discussion of the text, since it offers a significant employment of machine metaphor. In any event it stands as certain that the text was found in Hegel's hand writing, meaning that even if he transcribed the text from Hölderlin, it makes up a part of a discussion which we have every reason to believe that Hegel was involved in at the onset of his Frankfurt years.²¹ The text stands out from most of the texts in this phase of Hegel's career to the degree that it offers not a deliberate study of history, but an urgent prognosis for the future. It treats alternately physics, politics and aesthetics, but from a perspective of the primacy of practical philosophy (a

method introduced by Fichte already in his first draft of the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794). The measure for truth in any of these disciplines is given by the 'idea' of freedom. The first and highest idea is the idea of freedom, or as the text formulates "the representation of myself as an absolutely free being."²² Even the knowledge that we have of the objective world has to respect this idea as its starting point and build on its foundation. The question for physics, e.g. is "How must the world be made for a moral being?"²³ When this approach is turned to politics, it results in a sharp condemnation of the state:

Advancing towards the idea of humanity, I want to show that there is no idea of the state, since the state is something mechanical, just as little as there is an idea of a machine. Only what is an object of freedom can be called an idea. Thus we must go beyond the state!—For every state must treat free humans as mechanical wheels and cogs; and it should not do so; thus it should perish.²⁴

As the previously discussed text 34 demonstrates, it is not inconsistent with Hegel's thought of this period to criticize the state as a machine that makes its members into mere cogs and wheels. But the present text demonstrates a far less nuanced conception of the subject matter at hand. The prior text was specific to the state of the period of decline of the Greco-Roman world, while the present text reads as if it were a condemnation of the modern state, either the Prussian or post-revolution France. This leads Walter Jaeschke to the argument that this text could not have been authored by Hegel, since it does not correspond to his political views of this period, in which he eagerly awaited the forms of modernization that were unleashed by the French revolution.²⁵

Whether or not the *System Program* was Hegel's own work, it is evident in other texts from this era that Hegel develops in greater precision this critique of the modern, i.e. post-revolutionary state as overly mechanistic. *The Constitution of Germany* (1800)²⁶ is Hegel's most ambitious attempt during this era to address political issues. It represents primarily a critique of the antiquated political conditions in Germany and a diagnosis of why the Germany of the Napoleonic era fails to live up to the model of a modern state. But aside from critiquing the lack of political cohesion in the old German empire, the text also critiques certain developments of the modern state (such as Napoleonic France or Prussia) that Hegel sees as mere extensions of the lack of true political agency that makes the holy Roman empire destined to decline. His main claim of the essay is that Germany is not a state because there is no centralized political agency, and as a result of this people are bound together only through property relations of the old nobility. But

in developing this critique, Hegel also diagnoses the danger of modernized states to merely bind people together through economic and bio-political legislation, rather than engaging them in what Hegel considers the real political cause of the state, its defense.

Hegel criticizes the tendency of Napoleonic France to legislate and regulate even the minutest details of civic life. In constructing his critique, Hegel makes use of the figure of the state as a machine. Hegel writes:

In the newer, partially implemented theories it is the essential advantage that the state is a machine with a single lever, which transmits movement to the whole infinite series of cogs and wheels; all institutions that the nature of a society demands should depart from the uppermost power of the state, be regulated, ordered, watched over and led by it.²⁷

With this paragraph Hegel describes the practice of the Napoleonic as well as Prussian state, which took an unprecedented interest in regulating the schools, the agricultural practices, the public health, etc. Spheres in which society was more or less accustomed to solving its problems from the ground up were suddenly becoming objects for study by state councils, which strove to introduce uniformity and efficiency. Hegel makes clear his disdain for this approach in what follows:

The pedantic obsession to determine all details, the un-free envy towards giving orders to and administering over a profession or guild, this ignoble ruination of the proper activity of the citizens, activities which would have no relation to the state but only some other universal relation, is clothed in the garments of reason, according to which not a single heller of public funds can be given out in a country that spends 20 or 30 million hellers on the poor without the uppermost government giving the order, controlling, and inspecting.²⁸

While the latter Hegel by no means rejects the aspect of state regulation of the economy, it is interesting to note a significant parallel to his later position: he steps in here to defend the 'estates and guilds' (*Stände, Korporationen*) against the centralizing function of the state.²⁹ His central claim to the essay is that the real function of a state is its ability to mount a common defense and military actions, of which Germany was not capable at this time. In this passage however, Hegel critiques another form of political activity coming to the fore in France and Prussia at this time, namely state regulation of all of the aspects of local economies. For Hegel, the error in this centralized form of regulation

is that it causes a break-down of the traditional social structures that serve to regulate the economy, such as the 'corporations' and local trade organizations, and in so doing it robs the individuals in these sectors of their own distinctive form of self-governance in relation to their activity. What is at stake here is the distinction between a form of unity founded on political agency, and one founded on economic self-interest, and in keeping with his usage of these figures throughout this era, he calls the one organic and the latter mechanistic.

The vision of the state presented in this text is already inconsistent with the utter condemnation of the state in the passage just cited from the *System Program*. Here Hegel is not interested in dismissing the state by comparing it to the moral idea, but instead in outlining what the state can and cannot effectively accomplish. It cannot give society the order that would really only properly arise through an organic historical and social process. There is an entire sphere of 'universal' action (as Hegel calls it here) that emerges through the free activity of the citizens. This sphere more or less corresponds to what Hegel will later call civil society. At the heart of this limitation of the power of the state is a notion quite common to the German intellectuals of this decade: the French revolution had betrayed its true origins because its mission to liberate the individuals from the tyranny of tradition had gone too far and uprooted individuals from the cultural traditions in which they found meaning and orientation.³⁰ But what emerges from this essay is the notion of a state pared down to its most essential function: the unification of its citizens for the defense of the whole. The political body that tries to get by on less is not a state but a mere aggregation of interests, while the state that does more becomes a 'state-machine.' In each case, I believe that Hegel is still guided here by a certain conception of the Greek *polis*, and an attempt to contrast the kind of political unity that constituted it to the kinds of social unity that Hegel finds in both the modern democratic and despotic states. Hegel's identification of the state's sovereignty with its martial function serves as an extension of his earlier description of Greek '*Tapferkeit*' as the political virtue that made up the realm of proper political activity for the Greeks. If we place Hegel's critique of the modern state within the larger concern of the essay, it becomes clear that his call for the state not to encroach on society is more guided by his underlying conception of what political agency should be than by a Herderian conception of cultural development.

Like the Romantics, the early writings of Hegel are guided by the search for a principle that can give society a proper unifying center, by a concern over aspects of the modern state that represent a mere 'aggregation' rather than a proper unification. The concept of mechanism is crucial, in that it provides both Hegel and the Romantics with a figure for thinking a kind of binding

power that does not live up to the 'idea' of unity towards which they are working. But in Hegel, we see, the problem of social unity takes on a different aspect than in the Romantics, in that Hegel's primary concern is really with the problem of political agency or sovereignty. What kind of political body is able to act in a sovereign manner? What is the correct internal constitution of a sovereign state, and what is the correct relation between political power and the sphere of economic activity and cultural development? These are questions that drive Hegel to criticize the state of his era as mechanistic, and they are also the questions that would guide his political thought for the rest of his life. At the phase of Hegel's early writings, his answer to these questions consists in trying to reinvent the Greek model of political virtues within the context of modern protestant culture.

By analyzing the two major forms of machine metaphors in Hegel's early writings, this essay attempted to bridge the gap between two of Hegel's major intellectual occupations in this era: a study of the effect of religion on moral subjectivity and a critical consideration of the modern state. Most of the scholarly controversies regarding Hegel's writings from this era concern which of these two subjects, religion and the modernization of the state, should be seen as constitutive of Hegel's real concerns. Were Hegel's early writings indeed theological in nature, or was he not far more a critic of the modern economy who merely wrote of religion in order to arrive at the subjects that really interested him? If Hegel's writings were mainly concerned with a critique of modern society, can this critique be separated from the extensive importance that Hegel attributes to religion as a form of communal association and formation of subjectivity? While my study of machine metaphors has intentionally remained detached from these controversies, it should be clear through the study of these metaphors how much the themes of religion and politics are tied together in Hegel's writings from this time. I argued that Hegel's critique of the habitual, repetitive dimensions of religion must be seen as a part of a larger critique of the lack of political virtue within the modern world. From here, it is informative to note that Hegel uses the same figure of mechanism to criticize certain aspects of the modern state, particularly its destruction of the 'organic' forms of social connection that emerge out of the free activity of the citizens. But in this critique of the modern state, I have argued, Hegel is opposing the mechanism of the modern state to the conception of history as driven by political virtues, which he sees embodied in the historical writings of the ancient world. Even though by criticizing the modern state as a machine Hegel takes up a figure from the playbook book of the Romantics and Herder, his critique is based on a specific model of political virtue and this gives it a distinctive direction.

Chapter Three

The Mechanization of Labor and the Birth of Modern Ethicality in Hegel's Jena Political Writings

An organic relation describes a set of objects integrated in such a way that they are all bound together by a common teleology, each animated by the desire to take part in a whole that has a continuity that transcends that of the finite parts. A mechanism, by contrast, is a set of objects organized by external force, atomistic individuals that only cohere together in order to preserve themselves, while remaining indifferent to the broader context of their relations. These concepts, as was shown in the last two chapters, describe two different ways of conceiving of society. It would seem, at least in the texts that we have examined so far, that for Hegel and the Romantics organism represents the regulative ideal for understanding how a society should be organized if it is to be a sustainable whole in which individuals find agency and meaning, while mechanism represents a dangerous divergence from such a form of organization. In what follows I will demonstrate, however, that during his Jena political writings Hegel breaks with this way of opposing the mechanistic and organic aspects of society, and comes to see the need for a kind of dialectical integration of these concepts, a way of thinking modern society as an organism that does not exclude but integrates those aspects of it that tend towards mechanism. This transformation in his thinking corresponds to the development of dialectical method, as well as to Hegel's insight into the inherent superiority of modern civil society, with its emphasis on individual, bourgeois rights, over the ancient *polis*, with its subjugation of labor to a 'free' class.

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated that during his Frankfurt era Hegel critiques the modern state as mechanistic out of a conception of the political virtues that make communal life possible. However, during the Jena period, Hegel's studies of political economy lead him to believe that any account of modern 'ethicality' must take account not just of the ways in which modern economic self-interest is destructive of ethical bonds, but

also how it is productive of stronger forms of social connection. Hegel comes to see the nature of modern labor as increasingly 'mechanistic,' in the sense that it tends to isolate individual workers and consumers from the broader purpose of their activities, and he sees within this dialectic of labor a force that tends to generate disastrous political consequences. At the same time, however, he comes to embrace the possibility for the modern state to become a higher form of organism than the ancient *polis* precisely through this mechanism, in the sense that it can be a more pervasively integrated whole. The paradox that I will be exploring in the Jena period can be articulated as follows: the mechanism of modern economic activity, when left to itself, contains a tendency towards destructive excess when it is not adequately contained by the political structures of society; however, the organism of the modern state becomes *more organic* to the degree that it includes and does not negate the mechanism of economic activity, for only through this inclusion can this entire sphere of economic activities become a realm of human freedom. In these texts, Hegel views the mechanistic as a moment of the organic (not just as its antithesis), however, as a moment that threatens to 'become positive' and hence destroy the organism.

On the basis of this notion of the state as organism, I will argue that Hegel rejects the model of political virtue that formed his earlier writings as untenable in modern society, and instead he locates the integrative, organic moment of modern politics in the regulative action of the state upon civil society. Thus by this era, Hegel has quite radically reversed the Romantic critique of the state as a mechanism: Hegel views the state, precisely in the regulative function that the Romantics rejected, as the possibility for a form of ethicality that is more pervasively organic than the communitarian ideal of society; and he views society, on the contrary, as the force that tends to become mechanistic, in that he grasps society not primarily through cultural forces such as religion, language, custom, etc., but through the form of economic activities.

MODERN ETHICALITY

In 1802, Hegel authored two ambitious political texts in which he devotes extensive attention to the notion of civil society,¹ that is, to the place of commercial activities within political life: the *System of Ethicality*² and *On the Scientific Treatment of Natural Right*. In both texts, he uses a common measuring stick in approaching civil society: the notion of 'ethicality' (*Sittlichkeit*) as a speculative idea. To say that 'ethicality' is a speculative idea is to make the claim that human society, if it is to fully embody and realize human freedom,

must be a concept that is logically quite similar to that of an organism: it must be self-sustaining in the way that it motivates individuals to take part in it; it must embody a relation of internal teleology between the parts and the whole; and it must have a kind of earthly 'immortality' that transcends the finitude of individual actors within it. Hegel would essentially maintain this notion of ethicality from 1802 until his later *Philosophy of Right*. Thus Hegel views the ethical as a living system, but unlike his earlier writings he no longer simply views the organic as altogether separate from the mechanistic: in these Jena writings the organic can only sustain itself and develop by making its 'unorganic nature' into part of itself. Civil society becomes for Hegel this sphere of mechanism that is taken up into ethicality and integrated into it without destroying its organic nature.

In *Natural Right*, Hegel describes the development of the institutions of civil society from the perspective of a broad philosophy of history. In this text, Hegel is trying to reconcile the notion of ethicality embodied in the Greek city state with the development of 'bourgeois' freedom inherent in the modern era. He accomplishes this by viewing 'ethicality' as an organism that develops and regenerates itself by learning to make its 'inorganic basis' into part of itself. The text is instrumental in making 'civil society' into an integral element in the dialectical form that Hegel calls 'ethicality.' Hegel's method in this text consists in first describing the institutions of civil society from the perspective of Greek ethicality (particularly through citations in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*), and then constructing a case for a new, modern form of ethicality arising out of the liberation of civil society. In some passages it might seem as if he is condemning civil society from the perspective of ancient philosophy, but in fact he is articulating the Greek form of ethicality so as to set it off from the modern form. The result of this text is the realization on Hegel's part that the form of ethicality represented by the modern state, with the free development of civil society, is more organic, or more pervasively integrated than the organism of ancient ethicality. Paradoxically, modern ethicality is *more organic* precisely to the degree that it includes the mechanism of work, explicated up to now, within its ethical structure.

Hegel begins his account of civil society by distinguishing within Greek life two distinct classes (*Stände*): the class of the free and the class of the un-free. Following the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato, Hegel calls the class of merchants and workers the class of the un-free. The free class is the one involved in the governance of the city, and they are free to the degree that they are able to attain to an 'intuition' of the whole, and that they are willing to brave death in order to protect the life of the city. The 'un-free class'

lacks this freedom to the degree that they are stuck in the 'extremes,' in singular determinations that are opposed to each other, such as 'need-work' and 'work-enjoyment.'³ The un-free class only manages to unify the moments of the concept through a physical process; the free class dwells in the simple 'point of indifference,' in that its appreciation of the whole process is inherently 'spiritual.' Using the language of the speculative concept, Hegel specifies that the free class dwells in the undifferentiated ideality of the concept, the un-free class dwells in the bifurcated extremes of the concept, 'the reflection of absolute unity.'

As Hegel makes clear in his discussion of the structure of the concept, the structure is whole only in this entire process, that is, the concept consists in the bifurcation of its moments and the taking back of these moments into a vision of their unity. In Greek ethicality, the speculative form of the concept implies that the un-free class only takes part in the ethical thanks to the free class, and the free class only through the un-free class. But although both classes make up integral moments in the creation of 'ethicality,' of a functioning social whole in which there is a vision of freedom, only one of the classes enjoys the 'intuition' of such freedom. Freedom, here in this context, means giving up ones individuality for the sake of the whole, subsisting as much as possible in the moment of universality within the concept. 'A free death,' the willingness to die for the city and the courage that goes along with such a stance, are the virtues that stem from such a freedom.⁴

Hegel's description of the nature of the political class in ancient Greece and his identification of this class with '*Tapferkeit*' serves as an excellent retrospective articulation of the issue that I referred to in the previous chapter as 'political virtue.' However, it will be made clear in what follows that by the time that Hegel wrote this text, he no longer believes that such political virtues as the Greek *Tapferkeit* could serve as the constitutive force of modern political life.⁵ This shift in his thought departs from the realization that this class and the form of ethicality that it represents is inferior to that of the modern state, precisely to the degree that the modern state includes the notion of bourgeois freedom, the development of a more universal form of freedom that stems from the pursuit of economic activities that stood within Greek society under the aspect of the un-free class.

For Hegel, the departure of the ancient city-state means a fundamental change within 'ethicality,' and a shift in what it means to be free. He calls this change the "tragedy within the ethical." He writes: "In the loss of absolute ethicality and the degradation of the noble class the two hitherto separate classes have become equal, and with the end of slavery comes the end of freedom as well."⁶ But Hegel argues in the course of this essay that the rise

of bourgeois equality does not represent a simple death of the ethicality. The notion of tragedy does not imply a simple loss of the ethicality expressed in the ancient Greek state, but a movement of 'sacrifice' aimed at regaining wholeness. The soul dies to make itself one with the body, but in so doing it imbues the body with a life of its own. Hegel cites Plato in calling ethicality "an immortal animal in which body and soul are eternally birthing each other."⁷ This mixing of the 'free' and the 'un-free' classes represents not just a moment of leveling, but a moment of further, more developed and pervasive differentiation within the syllogistic whole called ethicality. In the hitherto developed conception of ethicality in terms of two classes, the concept had two moments, one of pure unity (the intuition of freedom) and one of bifurcated unity (the governed life of the worker or merchant). This form of ethicality must cease, 'sacrifice itself,' in order to generate a more pervasive unity between the moment of unity and difference.

Hegel poses the question: what would happen if the organizing principle of the second, un-free class were allowed to divide itself off and posit itself as autonomous? Could such a social whole ever organize itself in such a way as to become a form of ethicality? In becoming independent in this manner, this class makes one of the conceptual extremes into the unifying medium of ethical life. The negative unity of the concept, 'desire-work' and 'work-enjoyment,' remains the governing principle of this class, but this principle is allowed to organize itself as much as possible into a rational whole (what Hegel would later call a 'system of needs'). This results in the concept of 'bourgeois freedom,' a kind of freedom that no longer consists in the sacrifice of the individual to the universal, but in the protection of individuality as a 'universal' right. Such a freedom "has the unity of the concept only as an imitated, negative independence, namely as the freedom of the individual."⁸ In such a conception, freedom would mean the absolute right of the individual to work and own, the right to life and property and to pursue prosperity. Hegel makes it clear that he considers such a form of freedom a mere shadow of the form of freedom represented by the Greek model of ethicality, and yet he writes "even if the essence of ethicality views this (bourgeois freedom) as something foreign, still it intuitively it and is in spirit one with it."⁹ This cryptic phrase seems crucial to understanding what Hegel views as the relation between 'ethicality' and bourgeois freedom within civil society. But what does he mean by calling the latter a negative reflection of the former? How does this clearly lesser form of modern freedom relate to the model of ethicality he has developed up to this point?

We have up to now two conceptions of freedom, the freedom of the individual to give up his singularity and think and act as part of a unified

social fabric, and the freedom of the individual to pursue his own interests and see his achievements protected as a form of right. The first form must learn to recognize itself in the later and be 'in spirit one with it.' For Hegel already in this period, this is only possible in and through a state that allows civil society to develop itself by ensuring certain rights to individuals, a conception he would develop at much greater length in his later *Philosophy of Right*. This form of ethicality is superior in that the material substrate of society is no longer un-free, but lives in at least a negative reflection of the intuition of freedom.¹⁰ To the degree that this negative reflection of freedom develops, the ethical whole is more pervasively integrated, since now the class that had previously been considered as the un-free class is bound to the ethical whole out of a sense of their self-interest. Thus Hegel's argument seems to be that a totality is more organic as the parts become more teleologically connected to the whole, out of a purpose that is their own, and that the modern state is more organic since its model of ethicality accomplishes this through the factor of bourgeois rights.¹¹

But for Hegel this historical affirmation of civil society goes along with the notion that it is a negative moment of the realization of the idea of ethicality. The kind of freedom that it aspires to and the kinds of rights that it entails are only possible within a state that does not take the ends of civil society as its own. "What is by nature negative cannot become positive, must remain negative and must not become something solid."¹² Yet Hegel acknowledges that the freeing of the slaves goes hand in hand with the destruction of the 'free class' as a free class.¹³ So how is it possible for this now more or less universal, commercial class to remain a negative, subordinate factor in the social whole? To put the question another way: how is freedom in a positive sense possible in a society that has done away with aristocratic rule replaced the freedom of self-sacrifice with the freedom of bourgeois right?

For Hegel this is only possible through the action of the state upon civil society, and through a new model of political activity as such. As he writes: "The ethical whole must maintain it (civil society) in the feeling of its inner nothingness and hinder its impetuous growth into ever greater differences and inequalities."¹⁴ He goes on to argue that such a hindrance is only possible through the taxation of the wealthy, limitation of trade, the fighting of wars and the 'jealousy of other classes.'¹⁵ What Hegel gives here is a rather underdeveloped account of state regulation of the economy, but it at least serves to show that Hegel sees the solutions to the structural contradictions of civil society not in the communitarian ideals of ancient 'ethicality,' but in the regulative resources of the modern state as a distinctly modern form of 'ethicality.' But it remains to be clarified what these structural contradictions

are for Hegel, how they result out of the unleashed power of the commercial class, and how this force can be held in a negative or subordinate position.

THE MECHANIZATION OF LABOR

In *System of Ethicality*, Hegel gives an account of 'labor' as what he calls a non-ethical, or natural, potency of the ethical. In this section, Hegel demonstrates that even when work is divorced from its social or ethical context, it tends by its own conceptual development towards an increasingly mechanical form of labor, as well as towards instilling in the laborer a consciousness of 'right'. Labor is here treated as the interaction of humans with their natural environment, their transformation of their environment in order to meet their needs. But in this text, Hegel approaches the concept of labor from two perspectives, or under two 'potencies': one which he calls 'subsuming the concept under the intuition,' the other which he calls 'subsuming the intuition under the concept.' In the first, he gives a conception of work as an immediate relation to nature, in which there is the moment of natural need, the moment of negation of a natural object and the moment of satisfaction in which the cycle ends. In this first aspect, the subject of labor is subordinated under the natural object at which work is directed. But Hegel then treats work from a second perspective, in which there is the moment of labor, the product of labor and the 'tool' as a product of labor that can be reapplied to the labor process.¹⁶ This second potency of work Hegel calls 'subsuming the intuition under the concept,' since now the labor process is no longer subordinate to nature, but nature is subordinate to work. In this second kind of work, Hegel is considering the kind of work in which humans produce an accumulation, beyond meeting their immediate desires. We no longer just 'consume' the object, but modify it so as to serve us. We no longer work in order to satisfy our immediate desire, but suspend acting on our immediate desire in order to bring forth a product that relates to the totality of desires in a 'universal' way. It is clear that for Hegel the second potency is the one that opens up on to further forms of ethical involvement, since only to the degree that work leads to a product does it also involve a properly social component in which humans can encounter the products of their respective labor.

Hegel describes the second potency of work as tending to become 'increasingly mechanical.' In the first form of work, the relation between subject and object could best be described as teleological (in the sense of what Hegel would later call external teleology): the subject has a desire, the object is negated to fulfill the desire, and then the subject enjoys the negation of the object. But in the second form of labor, the work-activity does not negate,

but 'causes' an object to which it is not immediately related through a relation of desire. "Work in (this second potency) is hence completely mechanical, for singularity, abstraction, pure causality is in the form of indifference and is the ruling factor, it is something external even for the object. . . . This subject is a singular, absolute being-for-itself, thus absolute separation and difference."¹⁷ This work relates to the object not as a subject to an object (immediate negation), but as one object to another object, and this is the sense of a mechanistic relation here. The subject only manages to reestablish itself in the negative relation to object when it is outside of the labor process; only there can it 'enjoy' the product of labor. But because of this mechanistic aspect of labor, the subject can also increasingly 'save itself' from labor by using tools and even machines: to the degree that work is simply an object working on another, the human can use one external object to work on another, and thus not 'wear itself out' in the labor process.

The second form of labor leads to replacing the teleological aspect of work with a mechanistic aspect, but it also leads to what Hegel here calls the 'education' (*Bildung*) of the subject. "The universal, reciprocal interaction and education of humans; their absolute equality is here latent, and in terms of this whole potency, in which we are here, the relation is only present in the individual; a recognition that is reciprocal, or the highest individuality and external difference."¹⁸ Since this kind of work does not relate to objects through the medium of immediate desire, but by suspending desire and treating objects as indifferent, mechanical objects, it introduces a form of indifference into subjects that extends to their relation to other humans as well.¹⁹ In the first potency, Hegel says, the only mediating factor between humans was the particularity of sexual difference. But here in this potency, we do not just desire other human beings in terms of their particularity, but we relate to them in terms of the entirety of their relation to objects. Hegel eventually demonstrates that the creation of 'products' and the use of tools makes possible the use of language or 'discourse' as a kind of tool that serves us in communicating about our common involvements with objects.

Here in this opening section of *Ethicality*, Hegel also describes how certain 'relations of right' result out of the second form of labor. It is by no means original to justify property rights as implied by and arising out of rational labor processes that produce an excess; thinkers such as Locke and Rousseau did so as well. They argue that we would never have the incentive to produce an excess or a 'product' if there were not some insurance that the product would be to our exclusive benefit. But Hegel, by contrast, here justifies the formation of 'right' out of the transformation of human subjectivity through the mechanization of labor. Insofar as my 'work' does not relate

immediately to fulfilling my 'need,' but produces a product that at some further phase can fulfill my need, or another person's, I form the consciousness of products as being the 'same,' as having a value that can be comparable to each other. And Hegel here argues that in this consciousness of things as the same, I also learn to relate to other humans as the 'same' as me. Thus he bases the possibility of recognition between subjects on the moment in which humans first learn to see objects not as fulfilling a desire, but as representing a distinct and comparable 'value' in relation to other objects. In this section, Hegel demonstrates how this abstract notion of equality resulting out of mechanical work leads to the possibility of recognizing the property of another,²⁰ entering into a contract with another,²¹ but also enslaving, or being enslaved by, another.²²

In discussing 'right' within this section on work, Hegel does not think that he is giving an exhaustive account of what right is. He will make clear later in the text that these relations do not yet belong to the sphere of 'ethicality.' Instead, what Hegel does here is to demonstrate how human involvement with nature leads to certain determinate social relations, and to the formation of a primitive conception of right. Only later, in discussing industrial pursuits as a part of 'ethicality' will Hegel demonstrate how this basic conception of equality and security in one's possessions can exist as part of a sustainable social body.²³ Thus in the language of Hegel's later philosophy of objective spirit, this dialectic of labor belongs to the realm of abstract right rather than 'civil society.' But nevertheless, this basic account of how human labor transforms itself from a simple teleological activity into a mechanical and social process will remain implicit in Hegel's account of the nature of civil society. Later in the *Ethicality* essay, he discusses civil society (a 'system of needs') as a moment in ethical life, and here too he speaks of the increasing mechanization of the labor process and of a one-sided notion of bourgeois right. Civil society begins, as it were, not with natural labor but with labor that has already attained to the second potency, and its correct account assumes the results of this dialectic of natural labor.

In the two texts that I have treated up to now, Hegel treats the genesis of civil society under two different methods, the *System of Ethicality* developing the concept of labor first outside of the ethical whole, the *Natural Right* essay treating civil society as a historical force arising out of the decline of ancient civilization. But there are certain common methodological points that connect these two texts from the same year. In describing work as tending towards 'mechanization,' Hegel describes the way that work, by its own dialectic, leads to a kind of conceptual externality: the extremes of 'desire-work' and 'work-enjoyment' (which were unified in the first potency) only

relate together through some kind of external mediation. As the division of labor progresses, the labor process is only 'whole' in a mediating term that escapes the consciousness of the person engaging in work. Labor stands for a form of teleology that is increasingly divided against itself and in need of some external conceptual mediation. Thus we have a key to understanding what Hegel means in *Natural Right* when he describes the working and trading class as the 'inorganic nature of ethicality' and argues that this class dwells in the 'extremes of the concept.'²⁴ Since this class dwells in the extremes of the concept, it lacks the 'intuition of freedom' inherent to the political class in the ancient world. For work to be mechanical thus means for it to represent an abstract, or one-sided, form of mediation within the conceptual whole that Hegel calls ethicality. And yet it is one of Hegel's most important discoveries of these writings, both into the nature of the speculative concept and into the nature of social wholes, that the intuition of freedom can only grow in an organic sense through 'sacrificing' itself to the divided form of externality and creating a new, more fundamental unity out of this bifurcation. This means that the kind of teleology present in political action, its ability to accomplish its goals in a way that arises out of and is immanent to the movement of society, will be greater if this mechanical, divided teleology of the laboring aspect of society becomes a free factor within the state.

In Hegel's political writings of this era we see a transformation in the meaning of mechanism. In the work of Herder and perhaps also the earlier works of Hegel the figure of mechanism stood for the danger of the state in interfering with the 'organic' development of society. But here the figure of mechanism stands for a principle of development *latent in society*; the state can only become organic by allowing this mechanism to subsist and yet drawing determinate limits on its activities. Hegel's critique of mechanism, from henceforth in his writings, will revolve around an attempt to distinguish the functions of the state from the 'measureless' developments associated with the modern economy.

Up to now, I have discussed the Jena writings mostly in such a manner as to illustrate the positive ethical importance that Hegel attributes to the mechanistic aspect of civil society, its contribution to the state as a form of ethicality. But at the same time, these texts articulate a sharp critique of the contradictions that Hegel sees as latent in the modern economy, and these contradictions will also be diagnosed through considering civil society as a mechanistic aspect within the cohesive whole that Hegel calls ethicality. In order to arrive at Hegel's critique of these contradictions, I will turn towards the notion of positivity that Hegel develops in the *Natural Right* essay.

THE POSITIVITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Hegel devotes the fourth section of the *Natural Right* essay to an examination of the problem of 'positivity,' a term of great importance in his early writings that he uses here to critique the so-called 'positive juridical sciences.' In what follows, however, I will demonstrate that Hegel's critique of positivity here relates not just to the form of the legal sciences, but more fundamentally to the very nature of civil society, with its inherently mechanistic nature. Hegel defines positivity here as follows: positivity results whenever any 'potency' of the ethical whole tries to separate itself off and establish its principles as unconditional demands without taking account of their genetic relation to the other potencies.²⁵ Hegel is worried primarily about two forms of positivity in modern society: the positivity of the 'state' (which he associates here with Fichte's overly regulated commercial state) and the positivity of civil society, a danger which Hegel sees embodied in many prevalent legal theories of the day and perhaps more fundamentally in the actual practices of states of this time. Thus Hegel makes it clear that positivity lies more in the 'form' of laws than in their 'content'; a law protecting the property of citizens is not in itself positive, but it becomes positive when it attempts to define such rights as 'natural' and not determined by a certain level of commerce and political organization, and hence not subordinate to other concerns within society.

Hegel devotes most of his discussion here to the positivity of civil society. For Hegel, the legal forms of modernity are justified when taken as a consequence of a particular 'potency,' an expression of the absolute under this potency. But positivity results when the legal sciences take the principles of 'bourgeois right' as a totality that can be thought out of itself as absolute and unconditioned. Such an approach eventually leads to describing the principles of this potency as over-riding or superceding (*übergreifen*) other potencies, resulting in the predominance of bourgeois right over state right and people's right. (Hegel compares such positivity in the legal sciences to the scientist who attempts to explain organic and chemical phenomena through mechanical laws.)

In this text, in contrast to the Romantics, Hegel attributes great importance to the codification of laws. Hegel realizes, like the Romantics, that the codification of laws does not create public morality like that contained in customs (*Sitten*). But he argues that the moment of codification is a moment in which 'ethicality' recognizes itself and gives intellectual form to its latent organic character. The way in which this recognition occurs can be one-sided, i.e. in codifying its laws a people can fail to give real credit to the ethical forms that make it up, and such a mis-recognition will then allow one part

of the ethical fabric to dominate another and stifle the organism. Thus Hegel embraces the 'formalism' of the legal sciences out of his notion of the organic: a living whole is one in which the 'form' supercedes the content, where the form assimilates its content to it. But even in a living whole there is a tendency towards positivity, when, in the growth of the whole, the customs and laws drift apart and no longer reflect each other. This manifests itself in a set of laws that contradict the actual lives of the people governed by them. Hegel argues that such a system of laws becomes mechanical, in that it relates parts to a whole in such a way that these parts do not have an understanding of their relation to the whole.²⁶ Hegel even anticipates Marx in arguing that such positive laws become a means by which one class in society dominates another.

But for Hegel, such positivity does not simply result out of the misformulation of laws, or out of scientific errors; it results also out of the 'material' of society itself. This becomes clear in the ensuing discussion of where such legal positivity comes from. For Hegel positivity of laws comes not just from the past, i.e. from a society clinging to outdated laws, but also from new developments that do not proceed in a properly organic way:

Not only that must be considered positive which belongs completely to the past and no longer has any living present and has an incomprehensible and shameless power because it is without inner meaning; also that power is without truly positive truth which merely perpetuates the dissolution and sundering of the ethical totality; the former is the history of a past life, while the latter is the determinate representation of the present death.²⁷

Here Hegel means to claim, adding to his earlier notion of positivity, that false positivity dwells not just in the maintenance of the feudal order in German states, but also in the very tendencies of the new industrial economy. Positivity, or the legal form that does not adequately express the ethical dimension of a society, can result not just from a people outgrowing its laws, but also from a one-sided form of development inherent in civil society. Civil society has a tendency to posit as absolute the rights of a class that has a merely negative, individualistic conception of right. In doing so, it posits a subordinate moment of the social development as an absolute purpose of the development. The form of right is positive, or mechanical, to the degree that it posits a purely quantitative factor of economic life as a politically determinative force within the social whole; this latter aspect will become more clear through a discussion of Hegel's analysis of modern class structures in the *System of Ethicality*.

In this text, Hegel's thesis on the positivity of civil society takes on a new, more specific dimension. In a later passage from the text²⁸ Hegel gives a discussion of the class structures that arise out of the modern economy, analyzing how the dialectic of labor in a free market economy creates a measureless degree of inequality. In the *Natural Right* essay, Hegel has simply spoken of the 'commercial class' (*Erwerbstand*), but in this latter section of *Ethicality*, Hegel argues that when this aspect of society is allowed to develop in a relatively autonomous manner, it engenders distinct classes within itself, classes that are determined not by the political agency of individuals, but by their quantity of ownership. But the initially quantitative differences within the commercial class convert into 'relations of dominance' between its members. Hegel seems to argue that differences in the quantitative level of wealth between free citizens in a free market economy will lead to distinct relations of power and agency, an owning class and a working class.²⁹ This class differentiation is different from the two classes of ancient Greek society distinguished in the *Natural Right* essay, in that here the distinction does not take place according to conceptual moments, for the classes have the same political rights and the same basic motivating principle in their activities. And yet the purely quantitative difference within the commercial class leads to a kind of domination that is all the more blind and ethically alienating. In the *Natural Right* essay, it was posited that the commercial class represented the separated 'extremes of the concept' and that the extremes were only mediated by the activity of labor, rather than in an ethical intuition. But now in the *Ethicality* essay it seems that Hegel would claim that through the formation of quantitative inequalities within the commercial sector, this relative conceptual unity could become sundered, and lose even the external mediation described earlier.

In this state of affairs the well-off bring forth riches that are connected to the deepest poverty; for in the separation, labor on both sides becomes universal, objective; on the one side is ideal universality; on the other side it is real, mechanical, and this purely quantitative, conceptually individuated inorganic aspect of labor is the most elevated brutishness (*die höchste Roheit*).³⁰

If work mediates between the moments of 'need' and 'enjoyment,' then in a class society with a separation between the working class and the owning class, like what Hegel describes here, these conceptual extremes no longer describe separate subjective aspects of a cohesive labor process, but separate social functions. Individual groups of human beings become pinned as it were

to one side of the whole teleology of the labor process and pursue this one side with a measureless intensity. One class in society is completely absorbed by speculation upon the cultivation of new forms of luxury, while another group is immersed in the mechanical production of the materials needed to fulfill such speculations. The physical aspect of labor becomes increasingly mechanical, that is subjectively detached from the enjoyment of the product of labor. The mental aspect of the production process, on the other hand, takes on the aspect of an infinite speculation on the creation of needs, which Hegel calls a completely 'empty ideality' that can be cultivated to infinity.

Hegel sees potentially disastrous political consequences in this quantitative inequality within the commercial class. When groups within society become so confined to one side of the labor process, they become incapable of any intuition of the whole as an organic system. In ancient Greek ethical life, Hegel writes, at least the commercial class and the aristocracy could pray to the Gods of the city;³¹ but in modernity, with the progressive development of economic inequality on purely economic grounds the commercial class becomes incapable of submitting itself to any divinity outside of its sphere.³² And with this inability, Hegel argues, the very possibility of a common ethicality disappears, in that separate members of society become so occupied with a socially mediated material prosperity that they are not capable of cultivating the kind of political institutions that make for fulfilling their desires.

It is clear from the dialectic Hegel describes here in this section of *Ethicality* that the political problem of the positivity of civil society emerges from within the very dialectic of labor. The tendency of the labor process to lead to increasingly mechanical forms of labor leads to the creation of a class structure in which political consciousness is destroyed and replaced by a kind of blind pursuit of economic development. Hegel turns this incapacity of civil society into a defense of a higher political moment in society that hinders the measureless pursuit of wealth and the development of excessive inequalities primarily through a system of taxation. As in the *Natural Right* essay, he views the role of the state in relation to the commercial activities of its citizens not only as that of protecting the property rights that make commerce possible, but that of limiting or hindering commerce so as to keep it from propagating socially destructive levels of inequality between citizens. But for Hegel the state's limitation of economic development is not a merely negative or restrictive factor, it is the giving of a measure to a form of development that is necessary but incapable of giving itself its own measure. The distinction between the commercial (what Hegel would later call civil society) and the political in these essays could be described as the difference between mecha-

nism and organism, between formless growth that is driven by a measureless desire to own and consume material goods in ever more refined ways and a principle of development that maintains an intuition of the whole while letting each part pursue its distinct function. Unlike the Romantic defense of society and culture in distinction to the state, Hegel views culture, at least in the West, as standing so much under the constraint of the principles of bourgeois development that an organic whole can only be achieved by reinventing within the European states a kind of political consciousness that has insight into the political nullity of bourgeois aspirations. Because of the distinctive function that is required of this state in regards to society, this political consciousness can no longer be described, like that of Greek ethical life, as an 'intuition of the whole,' but instead takes the form of 'thought.' The modern state is grounded not in the political virtues of those who act within it, but on the form of the concept, which dictates that each moment of the concept can only develop itself in through-going relation to the others. Thus, I would argue that for the Hegel who wrote these two works, the problem of inequality in modern economic relations, and the political problems that such inequality entails, cannot be solved merely through a 'sense of community' or any such virtue, but through a rational insight into the kinds of structural problems that emerge out of such economic relations, and an institution capable of counteracting such institutions. Clearly, Hegel does not have such a robust conception of political institutions acting within the economy as in his later *Philosophy of Right*. But the commitment is clear within the text that the solution can only be given through such institutions, and the job of philosophy is to articulate the rational structure of them.

Chapter Four

Mechanism and the Problem of Self-Determination in Hegel's Logic

Much of Hegel's originality in conceiving of modern society as mechanistic stems from his complex conceptual grasp of what makes up a mechanism. While many writers before Hegel used the metaphor of a machine or mechanism to understand modern society, the notion of metaphor seems to tilt the scales in favor of nature, as if the concept literally belonged in a certain conception of nature and can only crudely be applied elsewhere. In that Hegel places the figure of mechanism within the development of his *Science of Logic*, it will be possible to speak of the concept as literally belonging first and foremost in the sphere of metaphysical thought. Departing from its logical status, we can consider the occurrence of mechanistic notions in social philosophy as well as philosophy of nature as an *employment* of the logical nature of mechanism, which has a more primal, constitutive place in the system. This grasp of mechanism as a logical category will demonstrate that much of what Hegel actually has to say about the mechanism of modern society derives from arguments that are first worked out on the logical level.

Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit culminates in the insight that human freedom is possible only in that individuals participate in rationally realized economic and political structures. Yet it is easy to raise the question: what makes the specific combination of political and economic institutions that Hegel describes 'rational'? His description of these institutions in his *Philosophy of Right* seems to rest on a prior understanding about the nature of objective rationality, the nature of agency within objective institutions and the nature of freedom as such, or at least it gives no adequate treatment of these issues.¹ The goal of the next two chapters will be to demonstrate how this 'objective' concept of freedom that underlies Hegel's political philosophy is grounded in a conceptual argument about the nature of a 'free' or 'absolute' mechanism that Hegel develops in his *Science of Logic*. 'Absolute mecha-

nism' describes a system of mechanistic objects ordered in such a way that each part of the system serves as a point in which each other kind of object is mediated with the rest of the system. For Hegel, such a system of objectivity provides a schema for understanding how self-determination is realized within the kind of external involvements involved in modern civil society. Thus my thesis is that the logical argument concerning how the *mechanical object* transforms itself into an element in an *absolute mechanism* provides the argumentative schema and justification for Hegel's account of the way in which an individual is to find concrete freedom within the institutions of modern social and political life. Thus before applying this logical structure to Hegel's political philosophy, as I will do in the next chapter, it will be necessary to spell out the logical development of this argument and explain what Hegel means by 'mechanical object' and 'absolute mechanism,' as well as the dialectical steps by which he connects them.

In order to pave the way for interpreting the unity of the state and society as an absolute mechanism, I will first explore three issues within the chapter on mechanism in the *Science of Logic*: **first**, I will turn to the developmental issue of how and why Hegel came to take up the concept of mechanism within his evolving notion of logic as a science. The developmental story will reveal that Hegel took up mechanism into his logic at just the point when his grasp of logical method was making a major change to its final form, thus suggesting the conclusion that Hegel's ability to think mechanism as a logical category is conditioned by his insight into the possibility of logic as a discipline that integrates dialectics and speculation into one. **Second** there is the issue whether mechanism belongs in the logic at all, i.e. regarding whether it is a formal ontological category of the kind treated in the logic. Since this has been a matter of some debate in the secondary literature, I will present an argument for why Hegel is correct to include mechanism within his logic. **Third**, I will examine the specific sequence of moments that Hegel treats in the mechanism section of the logic, with the purpose of explaining how the basic notion of a mechanical object leads to inherent structural contradictions and to a notion of 'absolute mechanism.' The articulation of these contradictions will demonstrate that the logic of mechanism is essentially an argument for why any real totality that is ordered mechanistically will be structurally incomplete and susceptible either to break-down or to dependence on a higher sphere. But at the same time, the explanation of how these contradictions lead to a fuller notion of objectivity, to the 'absolute mechanism,' will provide a blue-print to Hegel for how self-determination is possible within the realms of objective relations, a problem that will reoccur in his social philosophy.

THE PLACE OF MECHANISM IN HEGEL'S DEVELOPMENT OF *LOGIC*

It took Hegel a very long time to include mechanism (as well as chemism and teleology) within his logic. In fact, these categories of objectivity are the very last concepts to be adopted into Hegel's logical sequence, and their adoption corresponds to the moment in Hegel's development when he condenses logic and metaphysics into one discipline. In what follows, I will raise the questions: what is really at stake in Hegel's evolving conception of 'logic' as a science? Why did he come to condense the disciplines of logic and metaphysics, which he had held apart earlier in his writings? What in this development enabled or demanded Hegel to place mechanism into his conception of logic? In taking up these questions it will become clear that what is at stake in giving a developmental account of the role of mechanism in Hegel's writing is not just the status of mechanism as a concept, but the larger issue of what role logic has for Hegel as a form of philosophical construction.² First I will give a brief account of why Hegel came to condense 'logic and metaphysics' in his mature system. Then I will look at a fragment from 1808 in which Hegel for the first time works out a logical conception of mechanism.

Logic and Metaphysics

The basic architectonic of Hegel's philosophical system remains almost identical throughout his academic career, from his earliest lecture drafts in Jena up to his *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1817) that remains the blue print for his teaching up until his death. What changes is the methodological nature of certain parts of the system as well as Hegel's conception of the relation of the parts.³ The only visible difference between the structure of this first system and Hegel's later system consists in the fact that in these lectures he makes a division between logic and metaphysics as two distinct philosophical sciences, a difference that he elaborates on in his lecture notes. In Hegel's later system, 'Logic and Metaphysics' will be replaced by the term 'Science of Logic,' but this omission expresses not disillusionment with the project of metaphysics as such, but the realization of a conception of logic in which logic itself is 'the true metaphysics' (*die eigentliche Metaphysik*) as Hegel will later write in the first preface to his *Science of Logic*.⁴ Hegel maintained this distinction between logic and metaphysics throughout his Jena teaching activity. (There is only one comprehensive draft of Hegel's Jena logic and metaphysics, contained in 'Systementwurf II,' though he lectured on 'Logic and Metaphysics' four times during his time in Jena.) Not until 1808, in Bamberg, did Hegel begin the project of overhauling his hitherto

system of logic and condensing logic and metaphysics into one. During this time he writes in a letter to Niethammer that in Jena he had “hardly laid the foundation” for logic as a properly speculative discipline.⁵ It is, in my view, no coincidence that around this same time Hegel came upon the insight of integrating the categories of mechanism, chemism and teleology into his logic. Thus the formulation of mechanism as a logical category corresponds to an overall revolution in Hegel's thought, namely the recognition of speculative logic as the true form of metaphysics. In what follows, I will give a brief conception of what is at stake in condensing these two disciplines in order to argue on the basis of this why the adoption of mechanism is one of the pivotal concepts in this shift.

In treating logic and metaphysics together in a lecture series, Hegel was following an academic tradition from the second half of the 18th century. At least four other docents in Jena offered lectures under the same title. In the Wolffian school philosophy, logic stood for a discipline concerning the rules of purely rational knowledge, not merely a discipline of the form of thought, but a doctrine of method for gaining knowledge. Metaphysics was a discipline under which one understood the knowledge of all objects that could be known in a purely rational way, traditionally soul, god and world. Thus logic was considered as a propedeutic discipline to metaphysics, in that it provides the method that is required to approach the subject matter of metaphysics in the manner demanded by these objects.⁶

In an 1801 fragment, Hegel makes a distinction between logic and metaphysics along the traditional lines: he views the former as a propedeutic to the latter. Nevertheless, his relating of the two disciplines is not without a certain degree of originality, since his account strives to separate the two disciplines more stringently than the traditional account. Logic provides not so much the method for metaphysics, as it serves to dissolve the improper method and thus make a new form of post-critical metaphysics possible. “From a speculative side, logic can only serve as an introduction to philosophy insofar as it fixates the finite forms of knowledge by fully recognizing the form of reflection and clearing it out of the way.”⁷ For Hegel at this early phase, logic is a discipline that deals in the contradictory thought determinations of the ‘understanding’ by ‘reflecting’ upon them. This reflection demonstrates them to be contradictory to themselves and hence finite. Yet in so doing, logic points beyond the understanding towards the action of ‘reason.’ “At the same time, the understanding or reflection as the faculty of finite thought is driven by reason to make its way towards an identity, the understanding imitates in its finitude the act of reason.”⁸ Hegel identifies reason here with the activity of dissolving finite thought forms by carrying them to

the point of antinomy. The understanding is a form of thought (at this point still a 'faculty,' *Vermögen*) that deals with finite thought determinations, and when it engages in metaphysics, it is necessarily dogmatic since it takes finite thought determinations and tries to think them as absolute. It takes a concept that only has relevance in relation to a particular kind of judgment and attempts to think it as unconditioned or absolute, as having existence in itself. But Hegel follows Kant's method in the antinomies in maintaining that a systematic form of thought that rigorously develops the categories of the understanding will generate contradictions that show the finitude of the determinations involved. Thus the immanent treatment of the categories of the understanding demonstrates for Hegel a 'reflex' of reason. Logic, for Hegel in this period, is a discipline in which one undertakes a rational treatment of the pre-critical metaphysics of the understanding, and so dissolves the understanding into reason. Its function comes very close to that which Hegel gives to skepticism in this same period in his essay 'The Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy' (1802). Finite determinations must be dissolved through the demonstration of their inherently contradictory quality. But in this period, Hegel sees skepticism as a process that philosophy practices on the non-philosophical, dogmatic realist, just as he sees the anti-nomical process of logic as a preparation or cleansing for true metaphysical speculation. He does not yet see the process of dissolving contradictions as a productive process as well. Dialectics is a purely destructive process, and when it comes time for philosophy to construct, it will need other tools. Thus behind Hegel distinction between logic and metaphysics is a methodological distinction between the *dissolving aspect of dialectics* and the *constructive aspect of speculation*, a distinction that will disappear in his latter method.

In the 1801 fragment, Hegel offers a description of what kinds of moments he will treat in this logic: "the forms of finitude, and indeed not just gathered together empirically, but how they emerge out of reason; yet robbed by the understanding of their rationality, they still appear in their finitude."⁹ To see how Hegel carries out this sequence we have to look to the 1804–1805 manuscript: here we find a sequence of determinations not unlike that of the final *Science of Logic*. First there is (I.) 'Simple Relation' (*Einfache Beziehung*), which is divided into qualitative and quantitative relation, and finally 'infinity.' Then Hegel develops a section on (II. A.) 'ratio of being' (*Seinsverhältnis*), which, described as a negative 'reflex of being,' bears a similarity to his later conception of 'essence.' Next he treats under the rubric of (II. B.) 'ratio of thought' (*Verhältnis des Denkens*) the terms concept, judgment and syllogism, that later come at the onset of the 'Doctrine of the Concept.' Finally, in section (III.) on 'proportion,' Hegel treats the notions of

definition, classification and knowing, which will all later be treated within the doctrine of the concept under the 'idea of knowing.' Despite the unfitting division names, the concepts and their sequences remind a great deal of the sequence that makes up the final version of the *Science of Logic*, with its division into being, essence and the concept. Yet the later Hegel would never go so far as to treat all of these concepts as mere abstractions belonging to the realm of the understanding. In this period of Hegel's writing, they represent subjective forms in which the understanding tries to organize itself into a rational whole, but ultimately fails, since a rational whole cannot be thought by the understanding.

Hegel gives a hint in his 1801 fragment as to how he envisions a final sublation of the form of the understanding and a return to the method of reason as a constructive process: here he writes of "investigating the speculative meaning of the syllogisms" which he claims will reveal "the actual laws of reason, insofar as they belong within logic."¹⁰ This is a very ambitious claim that comes close to Hegel's later notion that "everything rational is a syllogism,"¹¹ a structural insight that Hegel uses to overcome the merely formal notion of syllogism and employ the syllogism to structure the concepts of objectivity, mechanism, chemism and teleology. Thus at just the phase in the 1801 manuscript where Hegel envisions a positive transition between logic and metaphysics, the "speculative treatment of the syllogism" paves the way for sublation of syllogism into a no longer merely formal reflex of reason.¹² The 1804–1805 manuscript does give a treatment of syllogism, but not in such a systematically significant phase. Here he considers the syllogism as a form of the concept in which the singular and the universal are mediated through the moment of particularity, but he interprets this 'concretion' of the concept as showing the way towards the moment of 'definition' (a universal determination under which individuals are subsumed thanks to their particular characteristics). While this transition is plausible from a logical point of view, it simply marks a transition from one mode of the understanding to another, not the awaited revelation of a new form of philosophical construction. The moment of syllogism hardly takes on the 'speculative' meaning that Hegel aimed for in his 1801 manuscript.¹³

In both the 1801 and 1804–1805 manuscripts, the transition from logic to metaphysics remains unconvincing. Hegel maintains that logic is merely a negative discipline that acts as an introduction to philosophical science, while he speaks of the move to metaphysics as a move to "true philosophy."¹⁴ Logic represents a critical discipline in which reason works through the metaphysics of the understanding, while 'metaphysics' provides a space for reason to construct its own positive form of rational entirety. It

seems that Hegel was moved to add this constructive discipline to the critical one due to a common philosophical notion at that time in Jena: philosophers such as Reinhold and Schelling argued that Kant had intended to go beyond mere criticism and construct a system of pure reason, but he remained stuck within the critical enterprise, thus leaving it to the next generation to construct on his critical foundation. Whether this reading of Kant is based on a misunderstanding or not, it is clear that Hegel was moved by such an impulse, but was not able to produce a consistent and original constructive discipline out of this imperative. His metaphysics falls back into the form of pre-critical metaphysics, and further it does not provide an adequate methodological distinction between itself and the previously discussed logic. It is even remarkable that Hegel does not even try to distance himself from the pre-critical metaphysics. He writes in the 1801 manuscript that "there has always only been one philosophy"¹⁵ and that it will be his task to save this original philosophy from its modern day detractors by "restoring the oldest of old." The more concrete 1804–1805 manuscript only confirms this fundamentally restorative conception of metaphysics, as it presents the concepts of 'soul, world and god' with only occasional touches of originality.

The real problem with Hegel's distinction between logic and metaphysics is that he is not adequately able to maintain the methodological distinction that he introduces in order to distinguish these disciplines, and so his conception of metaphysics threatens to fall into a pre-critical framework that does not take account of what has been criticized in the logic. Hegel tries to support the distinction between the two disciplines by calling logic 'dialectics' and metaphysics 'non-dialectics' or the 'negation of reflection.'¹⁶ It is clearly a sign of Hegel's dependency on Schelling that he attempts here to base his philosophic construction on a point that represents 'the negation of all reflection' (like the Schellingian 'point of indifference' or 'intellectual intuition'). But even this distinction between the two disciplines does not hold up, since a closer look at what Hegel actually does in his metaphysics demonstrates that he cannot make it far without using such figures as 'the self-movement of the concept,' a patently dialectical notion. Jaeschke argues on the basis of this weak distinction that "if the assumption of a distinct method falls away, then the separation of the two disciplines is not to be held up. But their unification is not just to be thought of as a growing together, but as the decline of this already poorly realized 'metaphysics' and the incorporation of its material relics into other disciplines."¹⁷

In Hegel's Jena years, he is still initially so much under the influence of Schelling that he can only give the notion of reflection a negative function, albeit a more thorough function than in Schelling's philosophy.

Correspondingly, when Hegel calls his logic dialectical and his metaphysics 'non-dialectics,' the notion of dialectics still stands under the meaning that it had for Kant in his 'Transcendental Dialectic,' a discipline that gives purely negative results. But as I have tried to argue, this restricted notion of dialectics leads to an inconsistency between the dialectical and the non-dialectical in Hegel's thinking, between logic and metaphysics, between criticism and construction. Hegel eventually decides in favor of logic and against metaphysics, but this decision is only made possible by a modified understanding of dialectics. This shift in his understanding of the dialectical is perhaps best expressed in the following sentence (from the later *Philosophy of Right*): "The moving principle of the concept, as not only dissolving the particular in the universal but also bringing it forth, is what I call dialectics."¹⁸ For the mature Hegel, the action of criticism and the principle of construction are integrated into one and the same act. It is the action of reason not just to take up already given finite determinations and dissolve them, but to explain why these finite determinations are a reflex of the infinite. This involves a far more critical notion of metaphysics, however. When Hegel calls his *Science of Logic* the 'true metaphysics,' he views metaphysics no longer as a discipline that constructs the literal nature of such real categories as 'soul' and 'world,' but as a discipline that explores the structures of thought. But these structures are no longer viewed as the faculties of 'understanding' and 'reason'; instead understanding and reason (*das Verstandige* and *das Vernünftige*), are aspects of thought that describe its objective nature. Thought holds onto the finite and thinks it as absolute (*das Verstandige*), but in so doing, it places the finite in contradiction to its own concept and renders it fluid. Without the stubbornness of the understanding there would be no fluidity.¹⁹ This conceptual movement is then the inner nature of all reality, prior to its manifestations in nature and spirit.

I have undertaken this explanation of the development of logic and metaphysics in Hegel's Jena years and the accompanying development of dialectical method simply in order to give a more substantial account of why Hegel is not in this work yet able to think mechanism as a logical category. Mechanism had no place in the traditional *metaphysica specialis*. Further, in that logic was conceived of as a criticism of merely subjective thought forms, it did not enable Hegel to make the bridge over to a logic of objectivity. For the mature Hegel, mechanism is a logical category. This means that it is not simply a transcendental category that the subject transposes on the world of objects, but a particular relation of thought to itself. Thought does not just find mechanistic structures in the world, it creates them out of its own necessity. Further, the thought by which it creates them is also the thought

by which it 'criticizes' them. There is hardly another moment in the *Science of Logic* in which Hegel manages so convincingly to unify the constructive, content producing aspect of dialectics with the critical, dissolving aspect of dialectics as he does in his treatment of mechanism.

Hegel's Fragment on Mechanism, Chemical Process and Organism

The most important document in assessing the development of the concept of mechanism in Hegel's logic is a fragment that was published for the first time by Otto Pöggeler in 1963.²⁰ The text is a fragment dated by scholars to the year 1808, hence to Hegel's Bamberg period, during which he wrote a famous letter to Niethammer proclaiming his ambitious project to completely refigure the position of logic within his system.²¹ The text gives a logical treatment of four distinct moments in sequence: 'free mechanism,' 'chemical process,' 'organism' and 'cognition.' It is the first place where Hegel is known to have treated the first three of these moments within the context of logic. Though the sequence is not the same as in the final *Science of Logic*,²² the development demonstrates a marked parallel to Hegel's final conception of mechanism in 'objectivity' from the doctrine of the concept.

Although the section on 'free mechanism' is rather dense and not divided into the sub-moments treated later in the *Science of Logic*, I believe that Hegel is already wrestling here with the same fundamental conception of mechanism that he presents later in the *Science of Logic*: he seems to describe a sequence between an initial contradiction inherent in the mechanical object and a further, more nuanced conception of mechanism that arises out of canceling this initial contradiction. What is truly remarkable about the fragment is that it seeks to resolve this contradiction in the initial mechanism not by going outside of mechanism to another form of objectivity, but by conceiving of a more sophisticated kind of mechanism, one that makes use of the schema of planetary mechanics. Hence Hegel's title of the section 'free mechanism' seems to pre-figure his later 'absolute mechanism'; this title reveals how much Hegel's initial motive for taking up the concept of mechanism within his logic is really concerned with trying to think through the problem of freedom or self-determination while remaining within the sphere of objective, non-teleological externality, a possibility which Hegel from an early point in his development saw best exemplified in planetary mechanics.²³

—1st Contradiction in Mechanism

Initially, Hegel undertakes describing an object that is both radically singular, in its lack of teleological relation to the whole, and yet forced to relate to other objects by immutable mechanical laws. Hence the fragment begins by

positing a gap between the singularity of the objects and the universality of 'law.' What is lacking in this gap is the conceptual moment of particularity. But what does it mean to say that the singularity of objects must be mediated with their universality via particularity?

Singularity here refers to what Hegel later calls the 'indifferent self-sufficiency' of mechanical objects, while universality refers to the fact that objects of such a nature nevertheless relate to each other in determinate, lawful ways. The question then is how objects that are completely indifferent to their relations to other objects can be described as 'determined' by these other objects. Mechanical objects are objects for which the relation to other objects is not an essential determination, and yet they are nevertheless externally determined by each other. Here Hegel articulates this gap between singularity and universality in language anticipating the latter *Science of Logic* when he writes: "The universality is the immediate quality of essence of both things (i.e. both objects); as singularity, they are both equal to each other, but their equality is the equality of being equally distinct from one another."²⁴ This lack of mediation leads to a need to specify how the medium of particularity plays a role in the interaction of objects; mechanical objects are not just distinct (*verschieden*), they must be thought of as determinately different (*unterschieden*) in order to explain why they relate to each other in the way that they do. Hegel explains this lack of mediation here as a contradiction within the basic notion of the mechanical object:

Singularity is itself the universal, indeterminate form of determination, in which the objects relate to each other; their universal relation has not yet particularized itself. But they are in this contradiction that their essence, their being-in-itself, is one and the same, and yet there are two separate, free being-for-itselfs.²⁵

He even goes on to claim that "this contradiction is the contradiction which makes up the very nature of singularity." And yet he argues, in a rather obscure passage, that this contradiction does not by its very nature lead to a 'sublation,' but rather to an infinite 'striving' (*Streben*) on the part of the objects to maintain themselves as distinct and yet to posit the aspect of particularity required for a determinate relation. Hegel's motive for introducing this notion of striving provides a first model for how Hegel conceives of a transition from mechanical object to mechanical process: he wants to show how a kind of processuality and determinate change can be attributed to the mechanical object without immediately eliminating the element of externality and the contradiction between indifference and dependence that makes

up the nature of the mechanical object. The contradiction at the heart of the object is not simply an inadequate thought that must be refigured, but a motivating principle that can be thought of as moving objects.

Nevertheless, Hegel also sees in this figure of striving a grounds for concern that the entire nature of mechanism must be rethought in order to arrive at a real explanation of how the mechanism works as a rational whole. As in Hegel's later logic, the figure of spurious infinity represented by this 'striving' designates a thought that does not live up to the demands of rational speculation. "This contradiction is not a sublation. . . . This striving does not find its end, because that which strives and that which is strived after are indifferent and free of each other. But this striving passes over into a more determinate relation."²⁶ This is a quite remarkable way for Hegel to express a dialectical transition. He has just said that the contradiction of the mechanical object is not 'sublated' of its own accord, but here he writes that this kind of objectivity 'passes over into a more determinate relation.' What seems to be at stake in this ambivalent language is that Hegel is wrestling with the very method of how to make a dialectical transition within his new conception of logic, and in particular within this new sphere of objectivity. As I argued in the previous section, the revolution in Hegel's logical method consists in integrating the negative dialectical aspect of his previous logic with a constructive, speculative aspect. And so when faced with a blatant contradiction within the initial concept of mechanism Hegel denies that articulating the contradiction simply leads to a sublation of it in order to reveal that we are not simply dealing here with a finite illusion of the understanding that can simply be dissolved through rational reflection. Instead, we are dealing here with a spurious form of infinity at the root of any rational concept of objectivity that must be taken up in a more determinate way in order to render a progressively more rational account of what mechanism is. On close analysis, this distinction between sublation and 'passing over into a more determinate relation' does not stand up to definitional scrutiny, since Hegel by 1808 already had a fully developed notion of sublation as determinate negation. Yet if we read the text as a fragment in which Hegel is wrestling with a new method, his ambivalence on this point can be taken as a sign that he is trying to give the movement of objectivity a different, more speculative impulse than his earlier logic.

—'True Mechanism' (*Resolution of Contradiction*)

In what follows, Hegel struggles to articulate this 'more determinate relation' into which the striving of the mechanical object 'passes over.' What emerges here is a form of mechanism quite similar to what the later logic

specifies as absolute mechanism, a system of objects ordered in terms of gravitational relations around a 'center point.' As in the later logic, Hegel also uses a set of syllogisms in order to explain how this new form of mechanism operates. In fact his treatment of syllogisms here provides a kind of explanation for how the initial conception of the mechanical object leads to the more determinate conception of objective rationality. The first step to overcoming the unsatisfactory notion of the mechanical object consists in thinking the nature of the mediation between the object's singularity and its 'universality' not as a striving, but as a syllogism: "In striving the mediating factor is not there, the positing of the 'free middle term' (*freie Mitte*) of these two free things is the completion of the syllogism (*Schluss*), which in striving is only present as a judgment (*Urteil*). . . . This syllogism is the true mechanism (*der eigentliche Mechanismus*)."²⁷ As the later logic argues, the difference between a judgment and a syllogism is the difference between a finite thing and a rational whole; in the judgment, singular and particular are only related through mere assertion or through the abstract 'is' of the copula, while in the syllogism singular and universal relate through the medium of particularity, and yet each of the conceptual moments can act equally as a middle term. In judgment, there is not yet a specification of how a thing relates to its universal nature, while in the syllogism the individual thing is taken up into a pattern of mediation in which it is explained rationally how the individual belongs to a systematic whole.

But how does simply shifting from the form of judgment to syllogism make for such an enriched model of objectivity? At first, introducing the notion of mediating particularity gives the object some specific, inner relation to the objective entirety of which it is a part. Hegel sees such a form of determination in planetary mechanics, where he argues that the object internalizes its relation to the central body of its orbit, so that the relation is just as much externally demonstrable as intrinsic to the object's own nature. Hegel writes here of the 'center point' that "it is just as much free middle point (*freie Mitte*), an external power which drives the object, as it is the inner essence of things."²⁸ But what Hegel finds so fascinating about planetary mechanics is how each element in the relation (the central body, the orbiting body, as well as the orbiting body's satellites) acts as mediating term for the other two. The center point only remains a stable center through the reference to the orbiting bodies and their satellites. Here in this fragment, Hegel gives an account quite similar to that of the later logic of how this first syllogism at the root of the new mechanistic sphere generates two more syllogisms, one in which singularity mediates universality and particularity, as well as one in which universality mediates between particularity and

singularity. What is significant here for Hegel in thinking through how each of these syllogisms implies the other two is that it allows him to think of each object as differentiated in its relation to the whole, and yet containing an immanent relation to the whole. He argues that with this realization, the mere inertness of objects is eliminated, and the object is 'free,' not in the sense of indifference to other objects (for this would be the unsatisfactory freedom of the mechanical object), but in the sense of including a relation to a rational entirety within it. The individual is now free not because it is indifferent to other objects, but insofar as it belongs with them in a structure in which each part includes a relation to the conceptual whole.

—*Hegel's Motive*

From here it becomes necessary to raise the question what philosophical necessity motivated Hegel to take up this conception of mechanism into the sphere of logic. The question is of course highly speculative, but taking it up might shed some light on the overall importance of the concept of mechanism in Hegel's logic. Otto Pöggeler, who initially edited and released this fragment, realized that this question regarding Hegel's motive in taking these new categories into his logic is interesting not just from a developmental viewpoint, but also in that it raises fundamental questions about the philosophical role of logic within Hegel's system.²⁹ As I have tried to argue, Hegel's experiment with these categories corresponds to his realization that logic must be not just a criticism of the finite categories of the understanding, but the realm in which a new kind of metaphysics is constructed.

Pöggeler argues that Hegel introduces mechanism, chemism and teleology into his logic in order to make possible an immanent or smooth transition to a metaphysics of nature.³⁰ Hegel's concern then is that logic must be able to account for the kinds of fundamental thought determinations that arise elsewhere within his system in order for his account of these other spheres to be truly 'rational.' This thesis is worrisome in that it seems to play right into the hands of those critics who argue that mechanism, chemism and life represent a kind of category error on the part of Hegel.³¹ If the necessity of these categories is just founded in the explanative work that they do in the modern sciences, then the suspicion emerges that Hegel has simply willed them into his logic and found a way to put them there, without being necessitated by the development of his logic itself to put them there.

It must also be possible to suggest a developmental motive for Hegel to take up these subjects in this fragment that is immanent to Hegel's developing conception of what logic is. I believe that this can best be accomplished by thinking about Hegel's intention during this period to reform his conception

of logic into a speculative grounding for the rest of philosophy. This does not mean that logic must deduce the foundational concepts for the philosophy of nature or spirit. It simply means that logic must, in examining the kinds of categories and determinations immanent to thought, not simply reveal the finitude of the concepts of the understanding, but it must far more provide a conception for how these finite thought determinations can be taken up into a rational whole. In order to give an account of the 'idea' as a subject-object that is rationally deduced, Hegel must show how the forms of both *subjectivity* and *objectivity* belong to a rationally explicable series of thought determinations. In taking up objectivity in particular, Hegel is searching for a kind of objectivity that can be explicated purely through the language of conceptual determinations, without turning outside of logic as he did in his earlier metaphysics lectures. His concept of mechanism is suitable to this demand because it does indeed follow out of a particular application of the relation of singularity to universality. However, this argument begs the question, why must the logic of conceptual mediation between the moments of particularity, universality and singularity be expressed in terms of an 'objective' system at all? This question can only be answered by turning away from this fragment to *Science of Logic*, where this moment is treated within a much richer conceptual lineage.

ON THE LOGICAL STATUS OF MECHANISM

It is a matter of no small controversy that Hegel is not content to place the concept of mechanism merely within his philosophy of nature, as a metaphysical determination of physical bodies, and that he situates it within the logic. Even Rosenkranz, one of Hegel's first interpreters and proponents, found it necessary to omit the categories of mechanism, chemism and life from his reformulation of Hegel's *Logic*.³² In contemporary readings, both Vitorio Hösle and Klaus Düsing raise similar objections, and it is fair to say that this section of the logic has occupied commentators mostly through its seeming inappropriateness to Hegel's logic. The question is whether forms of objectivity can be taken up within Hegel's conception of logic as pure thought determinations, or whether objectivity does not always presuppose a move outside of thought. After briefly sketching these objections, I will present a case for why the concepts of objectivity do indeed belong within Hegel's *Science of Logic*; I will seek to argue that what is at stake here in entertaining these critiques is not just the status of these isolated moments in the logic, but more profoundly the question of what it means in Hegel's terms for logic to be a speculative discipline, that is, a dialectic that not only dissolves but also generates finite thought determinations.

The *Science of Logic* has as its goal the immanent development of thought categories within a logical space that is not yet marked by the opposition of consciousness, nor by the 'externality' of nature. The determinations of the logic only have reality within thought thinking itself, not within the 'real' spheres of nature or specifically human intellectual life. By the same token, these concepts must be demonstrably immanent to the logic, which is to say, they must be seen as arising out of the more basic concepts of the logic, and not borrowed from without. In light of this project, critics have contested Hegel's right to include the concept of mechanism within the logic (as well as the set of concepts that follow just after mechanism, i.e. chemism, teleology and life). The objection does not take itself as a rejection of Hegel's logic *tout court*. While such critics might acknowledge the overall validity of Hegel's project, to the degree that he confines the logic to the development of such categories as 'being,' 'judgment,' 'syllogism' and the 'idea' out of each other, they argue that such concepts as mechanism and life are concepts that are only truly constitutive and literally applicable to natural bodies, which can at best be metaphorically extended to talking about other kinds of beings.³³ But if the logic is supposed to hold prior to the formulation of the 'real' in nature and human affairs, then it seems as if Hegel is going too far in adopting such 'objective' categories logically. Thus the critics argue that Hegel covertly embeds a transition to the philosophy of nature within the logic. Some critics might even see this moment as an instance of Hegel's pernicious tendency to deduce the material and the contingent details of existence out of pure thought categories.³⁴

The most immediate manner in which Hegel defends the status of the objective categories mechanism and chemism as not merely natural, but logical categories, consists in simply presenting examples of their applicability to non-natural objects, to the philosophy of spirit. The relations of citizens to the law can be merely mechanistic, the learning of a language merely through the memorization of foreign words is also mechanistic, while the relation of love and friendship follows a chemistic pattern (as in the case of Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities*). Indeed, the chapter on objectivity is remarkable in the logic in that it is the first place where Hegel draws such direct parallels to fully developed structures from the real philosophy. But it quickly becomes apparent that these references to the philosophy of spirit do not suffice to vindicate the concepts of mechanism and chemism as originally logical categories; they at best point to an interesting relation between logic and spirit, assumed that they belong in the logic at all. The logic must have the same relation of originality in regards to the philosophy of spirit as in regards to the philosophy of nature. The fact that they apply to the philosophy of

spirit in certain cases could demonstrate merely a relation of analogy between nature and spirit that is *not* founded in the logic. A logical concept cannot find its basis simply in a commonality between nature and spirit. As the critique of Rosencranz goes, the correspondence between the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit could be founded merely on metaphors.³⁵ From here, I will try to give two related arguments regarding why objectivity belongs within the logic: the first argument will be definitional in nature, clarifying what Hegel means by the word objective within the logic. The second argument will concern the necessity of the logical transition from syllogism to the initial moment of objectivity, mechanism.

a) That Objectivity is a Logical Concept

The objections of Rosencranz, Hösle and Düsing do not question the correctness of the logical transition between 'syllogism' and 'objectivity,' but instead whether objectivity can be defined at all as a logical category. Thus my account will not be concerned at this point with proving the validity of Hegel's logical deduction of objectivity (this will come later), but instead with a correct definition of objectivity as indeed logical in nature. Such an account will demonstrate that the development of the *concept* of objectivity is not the same as an ontological claim about the presence of certain kinds of objects within a given context of experience. Instead of making claims about the 'external world' the logic of the doctrine of the concept simply makes claims about the logical nature of how thinking must work if it is to be considered as a self-determining activity. 'Objectivity,' and within it mechanism, represents a distinctive way in which thought organizes its own activity. Such an account will also have to demonstrate that objectivity (and hence mechanism) belongs within the doctrine of the concept, that it is not identical to any other form of immediacy, such as existence, being, determinate being, substance, or intentional objects ('*Gegenstände*'), which belong either to the sphere of phenomenology or to the pre-conceptual logic.

Thus the only way to validate the conceptual forms of objectivity as logical categories will consist in explicating them purely as logical, which is to say, as forms of thought thinking itself independent of its manifestations. Hegel comes close to making such a formulation when he writes: "What we call a mechanical way of thinking (*Vorstellungsweise*), a mechanical memory, habit, a mechanical way of acting imply that the proper penetration and presence of spirit is lacking in what one takes up or does."³⁶ Although these figures belong to the philosophy of spirit, what is at stake here is a form of activity or thought, namely that the manner in which we think in certain cases is itself 'mechanical.' John Burbidge extends this thought in a manner

even more appropriate to the project of the logic of the concept: "one could even say that thoughts themselves are in a certain manner mechanically ordered—organized by the laws of association—, or chemically ordered, in the case where antitheses neutralize each other in a mediating context."³⁷ The emphasis is no longer on particular formations of spirit that demonstrate an analogy to a presupposed concept of mechanism, but on the nature of thought and the manner in which thought generates and relates specific determinations. But this leaves us with the question: what does it mean for a thought to be objective, or mechanical, in a logical sense?

At the opening of the section on objectivity, Hegel devotes an extended discussion to a kind of lexical definition of the word 'objective' (and its contrary 'subjective'). Hegel also uses the opportunity to develop some of his most elaborate comments on the nature of philosophical terminology as such. In seeking such a definition of the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' as logical moments, however, Hegel undertakes a kind of synthetic treatment of how they are used by other philosophers. He shows that in popular philosophical accounts, each of these words take on a double meaning, and then he attempts to reconcile the two meanings. Subjectivity, for example, has two distinct resonances in philosophical language (depending on the position):³⁸ on the one hand subjectivity stands for that identity to self that the subjective idealist defines as absolute freedom, as the negation and relativisation of all external reality. On the other hand, when we say 'merely subjective' we often mean: that which is not real in-itself, that which is only in our heads, which is merely mediated by a particular perspective. The inverse applies of objectivity. For the subjective idealist, the objective world is the external world that must be negated in order to preserve and attain my freedom and subjective integrity. On the other hand, we say that a truth is objective when it is true in itself, independent of any interference by the subject.

But what purpose could Hegel have in laying out these contradictory meanings attributed to the words objectivity and subjectivity by other philosophers? The job of the logic is, after all, not to give a history of the usage of concepts, but to develop the necessary nature of concepts and their own immanent development. Hegel is trying to make the point that both of these historical uses of the concept objectivity have some truth, and some oversimplification, *but depending on ones logical position*. Hegel claims we must start from the later meaning, according to which objectivity is the 'being-in-and-for-itself' of the concept that has overcome its merely formal structure and has immediacy. "At the present point in our treatment [the beginning of objectivity] objectivity has first of all the meaning of the being-in-and-for-itself of the concept."³⁹ But why is this first definition the correct one with

which to begin? Hegel's argument is two-fold: a) this concept follows directly out of the notion of disjunctive syllogism and b) this concept of objectivity does not presuppose any conceptual mediation within this new sphere. Over the course of judgment and syllogism, Hegel describes logical forms in which the singularity, particularity and universality of a thing are increasingly mediated with each other through the entire structure of the concept. The result of this dialectic is a mediating term of singularity that is utterly mixed with universality in such a way that there is no determinate difference between these two moments of the concept. This mediating term is a form of conceptual immediacy, a thing that determines itself through the entire external structure of objectivity in such way that it is indifferent to this structure.

In the course of the exposition of this new immediacy, the other meaning comes to the fore, according to which the objective world is 'in itself nullified (*an sich nichtig*)' and subordinated to the purposiveness of the subject⁴⁰. Hence he writes shortly thereafter: "But further in that the concept just as much has to bring about the free being-for-itself of its subjectivity, there enters a relation of purposiveness towards objectivity, in which its immediacy becomes the negative moment in regards to the concept and that which is determined by the concept's activity, thus objectivity takes on the *other meaning*, as that which is in-and-for-itself nullity."⁴¹ This passage hence establishes a relation between the two meanings of objectivity that orders them within the development that follows within objectivity, between mechanism and teleology. What is important is not that one use of the term is correct and the other inappropriate, nor can we simply hold on to the fruitless paradox that it means both contradictory positions in one, depending upon ones perspective. Instead, it is important to have the perspective that puts them in the right order, which begins from the most unmediated conception of what objectivity is and only adds mediation through the immanent development of this immediate notion of objectivity.

What remains constant in this speculative treatment of the notion of objectivity, however, is a logical grasp of the term 'object.' It could only take on this movement to the degree that it is a concept of the kind that is treated in the final section of the *Science of Logic*, the doctrine of the concept. But what, within the development of the doctrine of the concept, leads to the necessity of a concept of such a nature as objectivity? Thinking, in order to be a self-determining activity of the kind Hegel consider in the doctrine of the concept, must determine itself in an external sphere, rather than simply apply itself to an already given set of objects. Yet Hegel admits that this has already happened in the case of 'judgment,' for here the moment of singularity 'realizes' itself in a predicate that is external to it. But such a realization

is inherently finite, since the initial concept is only externally related to its predicate. 'Objectivity' is then a new sphere of thought in which the concept realizes itself in externality in such a way that the whole concept acts as the mediating term between each finite moment of the concept and its other.⁴²

The above explicated definition of objectivity also demonstrates that Hegel does not at first take up objectivity as a determination that stands over and against subjectivity or the concept. This distinction only comes within the section on teleology. At first objectivity is simply "the immediate being-in-and-for-itself of the concept." Standing outside of this first moment, we can of course say that it is distinct from what came before, the moments of judgment and inference, which Hegel calls 'merely subjective.' But the moment of objectivity does not at first determine itself in a contrast to the subjective concept, but as a new development of this concept. Put figuratively, the concept *immerses* itself in its new content to the degree it cannot yet split itself off and 'judge' its object. This gives us a first key as to why *mechanism* in particular represents the first moment in objectivity. As Hegel writes of this first moment of objectivity, mechanism, "the judgment (*Urteil*) is not yet posited in it."⁴³ This '*Urteil*' (in the sense of a 'division' out of a primal unity, as used elsewhere by Hegel) implies the distinction between the objectivity of the object and the subjectivity of the speculative concept. Thus it is only in the final moment of the section, teleology, where the *Urteil* finally takes place and subjectivity bares its head again as distinct from its object (first as the 'merely subjective concept').

b) That Mechanism follows from Syllogism

This first articulation of objectivity as the 'being-in-and-for-itself' of the concept does not, however, just gain its authority for Hegel from a popular usage of the term. It is important to see that the concept of mechanism is not just a definitional breakthrough for Hegel, but a concept that follows from the overall project of the doctrine of the concept. Hegel remarks that this transition from syllogism to objectivity bears a resemblance to ontological proof for the existence of God, to the notion that the concept of a most perfect being necessarily includes the existence of such a being. But the result of this transition are markedly different from the result of the ontological proof, as Hegel is careful to emphasize the distinction between his logical notion of objectivity and the common notion of existence as given-ness within the world of experience. So in what sense does this transition resemble the ontological proof? The transition from syllogism to objectivity is grounded for Hegel in the initial demand of the doctrine of the concept, that thought determine itself even in its relating to externality.

Just as the thought of perfection implies existence,⁴⁴ so too the thought of self-determining thought implies that the structures of syllogistic thought be made into objective structures.

The prior moments of the doctrine of the concept were: the concept as such, judgment and syllogism. In each case, Hegel is explaining a self-evolving relation between the three aspects of conceptual thought, universality, particularity and singularity. In order for the concept to be self-determining, it must generate out of itself its own relation to that which is external. The judgment (*Urteil*) is for Hegel the most basic way in which thought realizes itself in its other: the 'individual' splits itself and becomes an individual that is at the same time universal (S-U). But this realization of the concept in a judgment is finite, since the individual thing is only related to its universal nature through the medium of the copula. The syllogism for Hegel is the ultimate structure of rational thought, because it relates two abstract moments of the concept through a middle term that is itself the concrete nature of the concept. But Hegel's treatment of the syllogisms is marked by an internal, animating tension, in that any attempt to think a single moment of the concept as a concrete middle term begs a question about how this middle term became concrete. This pattern of regress leads to more complex syllogism, in which the middle term becomes progressively 'more concrete,' which is to say, more capable of explaining a structure in which the moments of conceptual thought relate not in terms of external being, but in terms of an internal activity of thought. The ultimate form that Hegel explicates here is the disjunctive syllogism.⁴⁵ What is unique about this form is, as Burbidge articulates, "that each proposition can be derived from the others, such that it is not necessary to turn to external instances in order to explain the course of the syllogism."⁴⁶ This represents an important turning point in the methodological process of the doctrine of the concept. As Hegel writes, the disjunctive syllogism "is no longer a syllogism,"⁴⁷ since it embodies a different kind of unity. In the prior syllogism, there was a distinction between the abstract terms that were to be mediated, and the concrete mediating term. But here the actual mediating moment falls into that which is to be mediated in such a way that they cannot be distinguished. The concept is now objectivity, not in the sense that it passes over into an external world that is not conceptual, but in the sense that it now expresses a kind of conceptual necessity that is no longer a formal relation between distinct moments of conceptual thought, but an 'external' relationality within objective systems. The 'internal' and 'external' are not here to be taken as 'internal and external to thought,' but as two modalities that are both within thought, the thought of internality and externality. Instead of mediating

between its own abstract elements, it now sublates all of these mediations and makes itself into an immediacy that is conceptual. In short, the kind of necessity that Hegel arrives at in the disjunctive syllogism corresponds to the first definition of objective thinking that was given above.⁴⁸ If thought is to be self-determining, then the gesture by which it describes externality must also be a syllogism, a form of mediation in which the entirety of the concept mediates between the abstract moments of the concept.

In the concept of objectivity Hegel describes not a transition from the form of logical thinking to a form of reality, but rather a distinct form of thought itself. Objectivity is a way of thinking that, at first, takes itself as expressing a necessity, a self-inhering reality that is not dependent on any external being to relate to itself. But this thought is itself engendered by the totality of what goes before it. And this thought will not hold up to reflection on its preliminary concept, since it will reveal a contradiction at the heart of any attempt to 'think mechanistically.' What is important to take from this section is the notion that mechanism is a moment of conceptual thought that for Hegel results out of the very attempt to think the nature of thought as a self-determining activity; but on the basis of this, it is just as important to reveal how this thought does not hold up to an internal reflection. The attempt to 'think mechanistically,' or to express the self-determining activity of the concept in terms of immediate objectivity, reveals internal fissures that open onto more nuanced notions of objectivity. Mechanism leads in terms of its own internal logic to the notion of 'absolute mechanism,' as well as chemism and teleology, and eventually to 'life,' as a speculative concept.

THE LOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MECHANISM

Hegel's concern throughout the doctrine of the concept is with thinking through the logic of self-determination, since what distinguishes the doctrine of the concept from 'being' and 'essence' is the notion of describing thought as a structure that determines itself in its other, rather than simply being determined in its other. Mechanism is a rather subordinate moment within this development. Hegel relates the moment of mechanism to this larger problem of freedom: "Although a theoretical or practical mechanism cannot take place without self-activity, a drive, consciousness, still there is missing in such relations the freedom of individuality."⁴⁹ Mechanism represents a form of self-determination that is wholly inadequate for the purposes of conceiving of the nature of human freedom; but on the other hand, out of this very structure it must be possible to explain the evolution of objective systems in which self-determination is possible in a more adequate way.

Thus in order to apply the logic of mechanism to Hegel's social philosophy (as I will do in the next chapter), it will be important to explain both how mechanism represents a contradictory model of self-determination, and how this contradiction leads to a system *within mechanism* of what I will call 'objective self-determination.' It is crucial to note that Hegel develops this structure of objective self-determination as a form of mechanism that he calls 'absolute mechanism,' so it is not as if he posits mechanism merely in order to overcome it and make room for a non-mechanistic concept of freedom, but rather he treats it in order to enrich it to the point of its practical applicability as a category within a conception of 'objective freedom'. The initial contradiction will be most explicit in looking at Hegel's account of the 'mechanical object,' while the end result of an objective system in which self-determination takes place will emerge in 'absolute mechanism.'⁵⁰

The Mechanical Object

Above I argued that Hegel's initial notion of mechanism follows simply from the immediate notion of what an object is. Here it is a matter of specifying what is really entailed by such a concept of the object. The challenge in giving a correct notion of this object rests in distinguishing it from other forms of 'immediacy' in Hegel's logic, such as being, existence and substance. Hegel writes that the immediacy of objectivity (the mechanistic object) contains the paradoxical mix of immediacy and the already mediated totality of conceptual moments. It is "universality not in the sense of a commonality of characteristics, but which penetrates the particular and is immediate singularity in it."⁵¹ This unity or totality requires at first an act of abstraction from any means by which we might use categories from the doctrine of essence to characterize the object. Hegel makes it clear that mechanism cannot be grasped as a relation of causality, nor as a relation of substance, nor as a relation between part and whole. In the doctrine of essence, individual concepts or moments were defined in terms of belonging to a relational dichotomy; the cause is only a cause in relation to an effect, substance contains the relation between substance and accidents, the logic of part and whole thinks the parts and the whole as co-determining one another. But the mechanical object cannot be approached in such a manner. None of these relational thoughts can capture the unity that is appropriate to this objectivity of the concept, and so they must be rejected at this phase.⁵² Over the course of judgment and syllogism, Hegel described logical forms in which the singularity, particularity and universality of a thing are increasingly mediated with each other through the entire structure of the concept. The result of this dialectic is a mediating term of singularity that is utterly

mixed with universality in such a way that there is no determinate difference between these two moments of the concept. This mediating term is an object, a thing that determines itself through the entire external structure of objectivity in such way that it is indifferent to this structure. This is the first key that Hegel gives for understanding the nature of the mechanical object: it is the stubbornness of a self-sufficient singular which is at once an abstract universal that swallows all determination. Thus the notion of a mechanical object is that of a thing that relates itself to a whole sphere of things through the terms 'self-sufficient' (*Selbstständig*) and 'indeterminate.'

This self-sufficiency and indeterminacy of the object is at the same time a relation to what is outside of it, namely to other objects. The objects do not have any differentiated relationship to one another, they are 'external' to one another by virtue of their self-sufficiency. Insofar as we might try to order objects for our own sake, through external reflection, we can find only the order of an 'aggregation' or a 'stack' (*Haufen*). This is the kind of order where things are put together with no regards to their concept, not out of any immanent relation, but according to a law or a chance that is unessential to the objects.⁵³ This leads Hegel to employ yet another phrase in characterizing the objects: at first they were simply 'indeterminate' (when taken in themselves), but when taken as part of a manifold, they are 'indifferent to their determinacy.' Whether the objects are ordered or in a state of chaos is thus not decided: but in any event we cannot find any grounds for such an order in the objects, which simply stick to themselves. Since they don't order themselves in any way, they are susceptible to ordering from without.

Insofar as the objects are placed together in a manner indifferent to one another, they remain external even in their act of relating. Since they are indeterminate in themselves, the grounds for this or that place in the aggregation is not internal, but external. This leads Hegel to claim that the mechanical object finds its determinacy in another object. But this 'being determined in its other' is not a relation of determinate being, or a relation of essence (such as causality), since the other in which it is determined is itself an object, and hence indifferent to its determining relation. Insofar as an object is thought as determined in another object, the ground of the relation is missing. The determining object has its determination not in itself, but in a relation to another object that is indifferent and external. The determinism that does not grant the object any immanent determination, that recognizes only a universe of mechanical objects, is destined to repeat this groundless act of relating into infinity.⁵⁴ This infinite is however the 'bad infinite' that recurs throughout the logic to signal a thought that contains a contradictory demand for completion. Determinism arises as a means of 'explaining'

relations within a sphere of mechanistic objects, and yet this 'explanation' never really moves beyond the emptiness of the original object. "This explanation of the determinacy of an object, and the act of progression that goes along with it, is thus nothing but an empty word, because the other object to which it progress also has no self-determination."⁵⁵ In Hegel's critique of this deterministic dilemma, he demonstrates that the mechanistic object does not truly fulfill the demand of the doctrine of the concept, or rather, it represents a contradictory realization of this demand.⁵⁶ The structure of the doctrine of the concept is such that the concept unfolds itself through its own self-determination. Thus Hegel had to cleanse the mechanistic object of all merely essential notions, and posited this object as indifferent to its external relations. But here we see that the independence and indifference through which the mechanistic object expresses the demand for conceptual integrity does not lead to a legitimate self-determination, but merely to an infinite regress in which it repeats its lack of determination. The freedom of the concept does not find a sufficient realization in this stubborn independence of the mechanistic object. (And hence we can read this section as a logical critique of any model of human freedom that seeks to define freedom merely as independence or indifference to external affairs, a critique found in many forms throughout Hegel's practical philosophy.) It would of course be misleading to imagine that the concept, as a methodological ideal, is looking over the present development and finds it lacking. Instead, the concept and its demand for self-determination, is present in the very activity of unfolding this contradiction.⁵⁷

This treatment of determinism is more than just an insufficient attempt to add determination to the mechanistic object. It is far more an immanent unfolding of a lack and a contradiction at the heart of the mechanical object. The contradiction is one between identity and indifference. Here the *Encyclopedia* is useful in actually using the terminology of contradiction and articulating it in a single phrase: "The (mechanical) object is the absolute contradiction of the complete self-sufficiency of the manifold and of the just as complete dependence of the same."⁵⁸ The objects are indifferent, external, and yet they are identical to each other in just this capacity. The object is determined by its other, and yet in the way that a proposition is 'explained' in its own tautological development. Since the other object is just as poor in determination as the first, the original object has simply doubled its own lack of determination. "Only one determination is present; and the fact that it is doubled expresses precisely the externality and the nullity of the difference."⁵⁹ But this contradictory development expresses not only the emptiness of the object, for it also expresses the development of a new logical phase. In that

the object holds on to its self-sufficiency, it deprives itself of any grounded relation, but it also posits this very lack of relation as if it were a relation. In so doing, it introduces what Hegel calls 'negative unity' into mechanism, just what was lacking in the object taken by itself.⁶⁰ The negative unity is in the very terms: identical in externality. 'Negative unity' implies that the very principle that makes mechanical objects identical and co-existent on an immanent plane is also a tension that animates them and makes them pursue a determinate form of action, such that they are not at peace with the mere state of aggregation that describes their relation here. When this negative unity is examined as a relation between objects, we have the basis for thinking the mechanical process.

The Formal Mechanical Process

The mechanical process emerges by carrying the contradiction in the object to its own conclusion. It is not so much the simple rejection of this contradiction, as the actual positing of this contradiction as a form of activity. As Hegel describes this moment in the *Encyclopedia*: "Activity upon another remains merely external,—formal mechanism. The objects remain in this dependent relation just as self-sufficient, resistant and external to one another."⁶¹ The abstract identity of mechanical objects becomes the negative unity of mechanical processuality, and the self-sufficiency of the object becomes the positive determination of repulsion. But this process is at first 'formal.' The objects are not actually changed, they remain stubborn to the process, but the process is that which exhibits their stubbornness in all of its implications. As such, the formal mechanical process involves a separation or *Ur-teil* of the determinations of the concept in this new sphere of objectivity: the universal is that which acts on the object, while the object is self-sufficient, receptive singularity.

Hegel describes the relation between universal and singular as one of 'communication,' and so he argues that this concept is an inherently mechanical one. Whether in physics or in affairs of the human spirit, the relation of communication is one in which a universal determination acts on singular objects in such a way that they cannot resist but simply absorb the determination without truly adapting to it. The universal is that which expands, passes from one object to another, in the manner of motion, electricity, heat, etc. The singular is self-sufficient, unable to truly posit the universal in itself, and so also unable to resist its action. Hegel illustrates this through the manner in which certain laws, moral codes and norms can penetrate human lives in an unconscious way. Such forms of 'morality' make the individual not into a true moral agent but merely into mechanical embodiment of a certain objective modality.⁶²

But in this act of communication by which the universal spreads itself through singularity, certain differential relations emerge. In terms of the logic of the concept, the universal singularizes itself not directly, but only through the dimension of particularity.⁶³ Thus the “positing” of particularity (as an objective or mechanical moment) is an important implication of the formal process. What this positing of particularity means is that the objects that make up the extremes of the process are distinguished by mass, power etc. in such a way that their extrinsic characteristics lead to differential relations between them. In that the universal communicates itself to the singular, the singular absorbs the determination while remaining self-sufficient and external to other singularities, even those to which is communicated the same impulse. Insofar as they remain self-identical via the abstract, mechanical nature of the universal, the universal ‘particularizes’ itself into a sphere that is no longer abstract.

The formal process is both *action* of the universal on the singular, and *reaction* on the part of the singular. The object that is active is the one that has absorbed the full force of the universal. But insofar as the objects are still self-sufficient totalities, this action will be countered by a reaction, the impulse will generate a counter-impulse (*Abstoss*). In the counter-impulse, the singular takes over the force transmitted by the object that had absorbed the force of the universal, but it also remains identical to itself, does not absorb but turns away. In the action, there is simply a one-way transmission, but in the stubbornness of the singular, the determination transmitted via the universal takes on a specificity. “Both, the raising of the singular determination to universality and the particularisation of the universal or its degradation from singularity to a kind of distribution, are one and the same.”⁶⁴ The determination that is universal does not simply disappear in this stubborn element, but becomes specified in the counter-impulse. The law or morality that simply takes over people’s minds without making them rational agents of its universality will lead to contradictory interpretations, as each makes use of it for his own sake. Hence this law generates a repulsion, through which the individual demonstrates his grasp of the letter and his disdain for the spirit. The counter-impulse is a moment in the formal process in which the conceptual moments represented by the distinct objects reveal that they have not been mediated with each other in any meaningful way through their interaction.

At the end of the formal process the object goes back to what Hegel calls a state of rest. It may have been changed through the process, but the change is not essential to it; it still has its identity to itself and its indifference to what is outside of it. It is what it was at the start, the totality of the

concept, "singular, particular in relation to others, indifferent to this particularity, and hence universal."⁶⁵ But this process was not in vain. This totality which was at first simply a 'presupposition,' a result of prior work that had to be reapplied in this new sphere, has now come about as the result of the immanent action of the objects. At the end of the formal process, the object is still identical to itself and in its own way universal, but is so only as a result of the process, through its reaction to the action. The result of the formal process, further, was not already contained in the first moment of mechanism: the mechanism is not teleological in nature, not able to place its end at its beginning.⁶⁶ Any change that takes place is not immanent, but incidental (*zufällig*). Although the relation between objects is still that of aggregation, external relation, this external relation is now 'posited,' and with this we see that the process is actually prior to the object, logically speaking. At first we simply thought objects as aggregated because we had no other means; the thought of aggregation followed out of the fact that objects were indifferent to their determinacy. Now this aggregation is seen to have *emerged out of a process* of unfolding the object's internal contradiction. The aggregation is not the inner *telos* of the mechanical object, but a process to which the object as such is indifferent, cannot in any way determine or resist⁶⁷. With this realization that the process posits the independence of the object, and not vice versa, the process changes from formal in nature to 'real.'

It should be made clear what the formal process did and did not accomplish: on the one hand, the formal process is not legitimately speculative or dialectical in nature, since it mediates between the conceptual determinations in a way that is merely formal, and since it does not sublate (i.e. eliminate) the contradiction at the heart of the mechanical object. But on the other hand, to use a phrase of Biard et. al, the formal process already provides "a first step towards the restoration of the power of the concept" within objectivity.⁶⁸ The formal process reveals that the independent indifference of the mechanical object is not real self-determination, but a form of mediation, one which presupposes another kind of processuality.

The Real Mechanical Process

The mechanical process is formal insofar as we envision the process as a kind of middle term in which objects relate but do not fundamentally give up their independence. The process can only go so far on a purely formal level, and its result involves a reversal of the logical priority between process and object. With the thought that objects are determined in and through their process, their self-sufficiency is relativized, made a result rather than an assumption. In the course of the formal process, particularity emerged as the medium

through which objects claim their independence, and so their independence is relative to their particular nature. In the real mechanical process, this moment of particularity becomes not just an abstract middle, but the essential nature of the objects. The objects are now no longer simply independent, but have distinct determinations in relation to one another. As Hegel writes: "They are no longer simply distinct (*verschieden*) but determinately different (*unterschieden*) from one another."⁶⁹ With this he introduces power relations into the objects, which distinguish them as playing distinct power roles: the weak and the strong. In terms of the moments of the concept, the one object is self-sufficient singularity and the other non-self-sufficient universality, a distinction he calls the 'distribution of the anti-thesis.' Of course they only take on these roles in regards to the other (the bully of the small kids can be bullied by the big kids). Thus these determinations only reside in the objects relative to the process that relates them, not absolutely.⁷⁰

It is equally important to see that the two objects meeting in the power relation must be involved in the same "sphere." One force can only overcome another if there is something commensurate in them. (Hegel gives the example: reason can act persuasively only in relation to a weaker reason, but can have no effect on the utterly irrational person.) Thus the universal and singular meet on an immanent plane on which something about them is comparable. One is larger than the other, has more energy than the other, etc.; the determination that compares them is not specified, just that there is one that allows immanent comparison. Thus the relation between universal and singular is utterly different than in the judgment or the syllogism. Here the medium of their relation is their common 'sphere.' This demonstrates already the manner in which the chapter on objectivity involves a different, no longer subjective mediation of the moments of the concept.

Taken to its extreme, this set of power relations can lead to *resistance* on the part of the singular and even *violence* that overwhelms this resistance. Insofar as the object that was characterized as self-sufficient singularity does not measure up to the universal that acts on it, it resists this universality. Hegel makes it clear that the self-sufficient singular must bend to this force; it is imbued with an immanent negativity that is simply enforced by the other object acting on it. But the object resists the universal to the degree that it cannot grasp this negativity as its own. (In Hegel's own terms this resistance occurs insofar as "the universal is identical with the objects nature but its determination or negativity is not its own reflection in itself.")⁷¹ The relation of violence is a relation in which the object does not posit its own negativity but suffers this negativity only in and through the other object. We see here to what degree the object's initial self-sufficiency has fallen into

contradiction with itself: it can no longer assert itself except in an act of futile resistance to a contradiction that is immanent to its concept.

In the sphere of self-conscious beings (who can also fall into mechanistic relations), this act of resistance and overwhelming violence corresponds to what Hegel here calls *fate*.⁷² A human being generates a 'fate' when it acts in such a manner that it does not acknowledge the universal that is immanent to its own sphere of action. Insofar as a being does not challenge the ethical fabric of the society in which it lives, it remains simply immersed in the universality that is native to this ethical fabric. But insofar as it challenges this fabric, commits a deed that is not prescribed by this fabric, it separates itself from this universal. But the separation is of such a nature that it haunts the individual. The more it acts against the grain, the more this penetrates into its actions. Eventually, the individual must either acknowledge the inescapable nature of this universal or suffer a downfall determined by it.⁷³

The end result of the real process is in stark contrast to that of the formal process. While the formal process ended with the confirmation of the object's stubborn independence, the real process finds its culmination in the dissolution of this abstract singularity. In this act of violence, the singular is cleansed of any still abstract, insufficient independence, and it becomes what Hegel calls 'the true individual.' The true individual is one that no longer opposes itself to the universal that makes up its own negativity. This figure of the 'true individual' at the end of the real process demonstrates that the result of the violence upon the singular is not the simple destruction of the singular, but a *change within the singular*. Through the process, it gains the power of the concept, the power to posit its universal as its own. The act of violence, which seemed at first to be simple negation of the singular, is in the end result a *determinate negation*, a negation that negates only the insufficient aspect of singularity, while preserving *singularity as such* insofar as it is a moment of the concept. But this determinate negation can no longer even be called violence, for to the degree that the singular comes to posit the negativity of the universal as its own, the relation between the universal and the singular is no longer one of resistance and violence.⁷⁴ But although this determinate negation is logically distinct from 'violence,' it is important to hold on to the insight that this result of the real process could only be attained through violence. Hegel writes elsewhere that the rational can only be attained through the exaggeration of the rigid determinations of the understanding.⁷⁵ The present tension between violence and determinate negation could be seen as just such a movement, from the understanding to reason via taking the understanding to an extreme.

Emerging from the real mechanical process, it now becomes possible to take up the problem of self-determination in a different, greatly enriched context. In the initial conception of mechanism, the object acted as a kind of rigid singularity that is indifferent to what happens to it. There was, as I noted, a simple identity between singular and universal. In the course of the real process, the object becomes a stubborn singular that resists but must finally succumb to its 'fate,' that is, the universal from which it has distinguished itself. By the end of this process, the singular is either destroyed or takes over its universality as part of its own. We have here a different kind of identity between singular and universal, or between object and law. In the formal process the object's lawfulness or lack thereof was not something that the object had posited, but something of which the object was an indifferent result. But here a distinct relation emerges between the object and the necessity that orders it; the object can posit its law as making up its immanent nature. But as Hegel argues in his section on syllogism, it is the nature of a concrete conceptual moment, such as the concrete singular arrived at here, to serve as a mediating point between the other conceptual moments. Thus the real mechanical process culminates in the notion of an object that is capable of serving as a mediating point between objects that represent the other moments of the concept.

The Absolute Mechanism

The negativity against the abstract singular remains violent and dissolving only insofar as the singular remains abstract, incapable of positing its negativity for itself. In the very articulation of this violence, the singular comes to gain power over its negativity and it becomes what Hegel calls 'the objective singular.' In the 'Absolute Mechanism' Hegel articulates this objective singular as a 'center' or a 'middle point,' and on the basis of this new kind of singularity he develops a notion of an objective sphere in which objects relate to each other not through the mere '*Drück und Stoss*' of prior sections, but through a relation of conceptual mediation, in which each object acts as a mediating point between each other object and the rest of the objective whole. Thus Hegel develops a sphere of mechanism that is somewhat analogous to planetary mechanics, and yet he thinks it through using the logical notion of a 'syllogism' as a pattern of mediation between conceptual moments. This logical development is of course important to Hegel not simply because it takes account of a certain kind of natural mechanism, but because it gives Hegel the tools to explain how objectivity can be thought of as a realm in which objects relate to each other in relations of dependence that are no longer relations of mere determinism or domination, but rather relations of reciprocal

mediation. The absolute mechanism is 'absolute' or 'free' in the sense that it represents a system of objects in which the coherence of motion between objects can be explained purely through the conceptual nature of how the objects interact. This concept of reciprocal mediation between parts in an objective whole will be crucial to Hegel's arguments regarding the structure of the modern state. In Hegel's mature concept of the state, the state enables its members to be free by lifting them above the relation of blind dependence present in the economy and allowing each material aspect of the state to act as a point in which each other sphere converges with the whole. Pointing towards this political application, Hegel develops near the end of this section on absolute mechanism a fascinating discussion of how the unity of state and society can be regarded as an 'absolute mechanism' (this discussion will form the basis of discussion in the following chapter).

The 'center point' is clearly significant to Hegel because it enables him to posit within the realm of externally related objects a system in which objects can be spoken of, in the entirety of their relations, as 'free.' The center point gives unity to a system of objects, so that they are not bound together by external aggregation. In relating to the entire gravitational system that forms around it, the center point is merely relating to itself, but its self-relation is no longer that of a singular thing that defines itself in distinction to the objects around it, rather that of a concrete individual that defines itself through its capacity to mediate between one externality and another. If the overall task of the chapter on objectivity in the doctrine of the concept is to consider the way in which a self-determining concept must manifest itself in objective structures, then this system of objects ordered around a middle point demonstrates the achievement of a point at which the concept of mediation, as developed in the section on syllogism, is comprehensible as a set of objective structures. The middle point in the absolute mechanism is not only a singular, but also an 'objective universal.' If up to now the universal was only visible as the negativity of the process, as that which was resisted or passed over, it is now visible as the animating "immanent essence of objects."⁷⁶ At first the object was an indifferent immediacy of the conceptual moments, then we saw that the truth of this object is a process in which the singular is acted on and reacts to the universal. Now the sphere of objectivity is organized around the center point that is both objectively singular and objectively universal. Though the distinct objects are still external to one another, they each contain a relation to the center, and so they each have this objective unity of the concept as their essence (thus it is no longer possible to speak of one object as universal and another as singular, as in the formal and real processes). The mechanistic process becomes 'absolute' insofar as it

is no longer dependent on a moment external to the objects, and the objects themselves become the explanation for how they relate to one another.

To the degree that the distinct objects are still external to the center, their relation to it is one of 'striving' or '*Sollen*,' that is to say, there is an unrealized unity that animates their motions. The aspect of striving expresses a negative unity with the center, a way in which the objects are negatively related to their independence and persistence outside of the center. Their present finitude and separation is not their inner truth. But this striving, as the determination of the objects, is no longer the kind of determination that is posited from without through a relation of mere 'communication' of motion. In a comparison to the formal process, Hegel calls the destination of this striving "the concrete, no longer externally posited rest."⁷⁷ The unity with the center represents an immanent determination, although an unrealized immanent determination. Herein lies also a dualism, or even a contradiction within the absolute mechanism: the determination of relating to the center is immanent to the objects, and no longer mediated by "*Drück und Stoss*," but the sphere in which the objects actually strive and move is one of externality. Although Hegel first rejected duality in describing the mechanistic object,⁷⁸ such a duality has now developed in the object. In the immediacy of the mechanism, the object could only be determined by another object, and so the process of explaining determination broke down into an infinite regress of empty explanation. Insofar as the determinations of centrality and striving for the center are immanent to the objects, there is more than the mere 'aggregation' of objects. The objects relate to each other through the mediation of their own universal nature. Since objects turn inwards in order to find their determinate relation to the totality, they are not determined by other objects (as in determinism). Thus Hegel writes that the central body "has ceased to be merely an object."⁷⁹ It has become also "immanent form, self-determining principle, in which the objects inhere and through which they are bound into a true unity." The bodies related to a center, when viewed in their inter-relation and totality are no longer a 'mere conglomeration' or aggregation. The insufficiency of the earlier model of 'explanation' of objective relations by means of infinite vacillation has been overcome, and indeed precisely through the immanent overcoming of the empty monism implicated in the initial demand for objective immediacy. Objectivity now contains differentiated elements of the concept, present here as the distinction between animating ideality and mere reality, or between principle and object.

The central body itself is both a single object ('objectively singular') and a determination that is immanent to the non-central bodies that are

outside of it. This recalls the notion from the previous chapter of the *Logic* on syllogism that the middle term of the syllogism is a concrete conceptual moment that enables the other, not yet concrete conceptual moments of the syllogism to relate to the entirety of the concept. Thus Hegel returns to the figure of the syllogism in explaining how the absolute mechanism forms an ordered totality: the central body is like a middle term that has not yet developed its extremes. This is to say, the logic of the center is up to now a logic that explains a conceptual *mediation*, but it does not adequately explain the differential elements of this mediation. What has already been articulated is the mediating factor in external bodies, but these external bodies now have to be articulated as true 'extremes,' as of such a nature so as to submit to this mediation. Even those bodies that are drawn to the center, but remain outside of it, become 'relative centers' because of their negative unity with the center. They are relative centers in relation to a third figure, which Hegel calls 'non-self-sufficient objects.' Because the relative centers embody the relation of centrality, they act in relation to this further class of objects in the same way that the center acts in relation to them. This results in a syllogism, in which the relative center relates to the non-self-sufficient objects via the absolute center, which is the middle term (1st syllogism). This syllogism merely articulates the notion that we have been talking of up to now, namely a set of objects ordered around and animated by a relation to an absolute middle point. Yet by articulating this here as a syllogism, Hegel demonstrates that each term of the relation must be capable of being taken as a point at which the other two points relate to the whole. Thus a further syllogism follows from this relation, in which the relative centers act as the middle term between the absolute center and the non-self-sufficient objects. The relative centers subsume the objects to the same degree that they themselves are subsumed under the absolute center (2nd syllogism). Finally, there is a last syllogism to round out the series: the non-self-sufficient objects act as a middle term between the relative and the absolute centers (3rd syllogism). The relative centers need the non-self-sufficient objects in order to find themselves in the state of striving through which they relate to the absolute center. Only via these non-self-sufficient objects do the relative centers attain to the state of inner dissonance or incompleteness that makes possible a relation of external unity, in which "their (the relative center's) relation to self is a striving for the absolute middle point."⁸⁰

Hegel singles out this final syllogism as a merely 'formal syllogism,' which has its truth in the others. Although it is true that the relative centers depend logically upon the further extreme of the external objects in order to

realize a state of striving for the absolute, this relation between the relative centers and the 'extremes' expresses the dependence of the absolute mechanism on the more primitive conception of mechanism. To privilege this last formal syllogism would be to fall back below the level of the absolute mechanism into a set of relations dominated by mere aggregation, external mediation. Only the totality of the three syllogisms offers a form of mechanism that is 'absolute,' because it lends each of the three kinds of object the property of mediation between the others, and so gives each a place in the ideal totality.⁸¹ The syllogism provides the key to grasping this relation of objects in a way that escapes the mere logic of one object dominating another, since it allows Hegel to think a system of objects in which each relation of mediation by one kind of object points towards the conceptual necessity of the other kinds of objects also acting as mediating terms.

At the end of the absolute mechanism, Hegel introduces the moment of 'law,' and with this, I believe he is simply elucidating in its full extreme the tension involved from the start in the notion of absolute mechanism. From the perspective of these three syllogisms, in which absolute center, relative center and non-self-sufficient objects each act in a mediating relation between the others, it becomes possible to articulate the relation of mediation as a *law* that inheres in each.⁸² Gravitation is an abstract continuum in which each object partakes, but which ensures a unity of the whole field of objects within a sphere of immanence ("immanent form"). Henceforth, the object contains within itself its own relation to center. Every object contains within itself the tension between centrality and externality that was earlier the tension animating the extremes in relation to the center

The object is free in the sense that it can posit its lack as its own. But this figure of 'free necessity,'⁸³ or of a mechanism that is absolute only because it has made its lack its own, is manifestly paradoxical and contradictory. Throughout the doctrine of the concept, freedom stands for self-determination, the ability to posit a relation as immanent to one's own development, rather than simply defining oneself in terms of the relation; this definition of freedom is founded on a general contrast between the logic of essence and the logic of the concept. But here there is a marked tension: the striving of the mechanical (as well as the later chemical) object implies self-determination, but this self-determination is only manifest as an internal lack or need for the other (even more clearly in the case of chemism). With this first moment of self-determination within the sphere of objectivity, a contradiction has been introduced that will only really be overcome insofar as objectivity itself has been sublated (thus the figure of 'striving' and '*Sollen*' will haunt chemism and teleology as well).

Some commentators see absolute mechanism as the reemergence of the subjective concept in the sphere of objectivity.⁸⁴ They support this argument by citing the way in which the conceptual determinations, singular, particular and universal, reemerge here as an organized whole that penetrate one another. Also, they find in the sublation of aggregated relation between objects the birth of a kind of self-determination that is appropriate to subjectivity. This interpretation involves, in my view, an overstatement of what is at stake in absolute mechanism, and it rests on an incorrect understanding of the position of mechanism within the section on objectivity. Hegel has good reason to hold back on the reemergence of the subjective concept until he gets to the section on teleology.⁸⁵ By not simply collapsing the absolute mechanism with the organic notion of inner teleology that Hegel treats later we are in a position to use this notion of absolute mechanism in order to understand how explicitly mechanistic social relations can be taken up into a logic of social freedom rather than simply eliminated.

Absolute mechanism stands as an important moment in the doctrine of the concept that must be kept distinct both from the earlier discussion of syllogism and the latter discussion of teleology. The importance of the absolute mechanism is that it demonstrates that within the realm of external, non-teleological activity between objects, certain structures emerge which provide the basis for thinking of a mechanistic object as determining itself in relation to a rational whole. Keeping this moment distinct provides a basis for placing it in the context of Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit: here too, Hegel seeks to show how freedom must be described as engendered and made possible within social interactions and institutions, before locating the problem of spirit's 'belonging with itself' within the higher sphere of religion and philosophy. For this reason, I believe it is no coincidence that Hegel ends the chapter on absolute mechanism with the most extended reference to social and political bodies that can be found within the *Science of Logic* (more on this reference in Ch. 5). The structure of absolute mechanism does not by any means give an exhaustive account of what freedom or self-determination means for Hegel, but it provides a logical response to one of Hegel's most difficult and creative philosophical questions: how can humans be 'free' in a world where their interests and needs are largely dictated by economic relations? How can political freedom be theorized without negating or ignoring the mass of social relations engendered by the economy? In the coming chapter, I will argue that the structure of absolute mechanism provides a logical schema for understanding how Hegel addresses these issues in his *Philosophy of Right*.

Ultimately, we will see that this immanent unfolding of a syllogistic structure within mechanism corresponds to an important point in Hegel's

mature social thought: civil society, though it is a sphere of externality in which atomistic individuals pursue their private interest, generates through its own principle of particularity a rational, which is to say, syllogistic structure, in which the particular mediates between the individual and the universal. Although it is still an incomplete form of mediation, the fact that it is such a form of mediation at all makes it rational and makes it capable of expressing a conceptual necessity, for as the absolute mechanism demonstrates, the most insufficient form of syllogism generates its own relation to the other two. For the mature Hegel, logical mechanism is capable of generating a first pre-form of rational self-determination, just as civil society is not merely a realm of chance and chaos, but a form of ethicality that provides an important contribution to the form of ethical organization embodied in the modern state.

Mechanism in Teleology: The section on mechanism ends with the absolute mechanism, and goes over first into chemism, then into teleology. What I have taken pain to demonstrate is that this absolute mechanism is still mechanistic, that it represents a rationally comprehensible whole that is articulated without introducing the category of subjective purpose. In the further dialectic of objectivity, this dialectic of mechanism does not just disappear, but remains sublated (in the positive sense), particularly in the articulation of teleology. Of course there is a trivial sense in which one can always say that the earlier moments remain latent in the later moments according to Hegel's dual notion of sublation. But what I am interested in is spelling out the specific sense in which the logic of teleology involves an articulation of a relation to the mechanistic realm of objects.

Purposeful action is different from mechanistic action, but is at the same time an approach to mechanistic action. Teleology is the point in the doctrine of the concept where subjectivity reemerges. Here we can speak of subjectivity standing over and against objectivity (external teleology). For teleological action, the mechanical world is the outside, but the outside that must be made into an inside. The person who works on the world of objects not only negates the objects, but studies them, masters them, appropriates the properties that are immanent to them and makes these properties part of their own design. In (external) teleology the subject sets out to change the object, but in the course of doing so, it changes itself by means of its immersion in the object. Such a formulation is present both in the section on teleology within the *Logic*, as well as in the conception of work in the self-consciousness section of the *Phenomenology*, where the slave gains freedom by immersing his consciousness in the objective, enduring qualities of the material that is modified through work. But the *Logic* adds a further

nuance to the subject: it takes advantage of the already explicated dialectic of mechanism in order to demonstrate that if mechanism did not sublate itself in its own way, and if it did not tend towards the rational form of the absolute mechanism, then the teleological subject would not be able to 'work' on the mechanistic object. Put more simply, if mechanism did not negate itself, then teleology could not negate it either; if the world of lifeless objects did not have an immanent rationality, then the rational subject that makes use of them would not ever be at home in working on them. The transition from external teleology to realized teleology in Hegel's account is only made possible by a recapitulation of the fact that mechanism sublates itself in the manners described.⁸⁶

Hegel describes this figure as the '*List der Vernunft*,' the trick of reason, an expression that also reoccurs in Hegel's discussion of mechanized work in the *Philosophy of Right*. In both cases, the trick of reason is that reason does not work directly on the things, but lets the things work on themselves by using their own mechanical laws in a teleological way. The machine operates mechanically, but it generates a product that corresponds to the subjective goal of its producer. From the perspective of the logical sequence at work here, the sphere of mechanism exists as a key mediating moment within the full unfolding of teleology. It is as if the two forms of activity exist alongside one another, the mechanical within the teleological, the mechanical as a realm of law and self-determining objectivity which provides the necessary learning process for the subjective factor of teleology. The teleology that does not embrace the mechanical aspect of things remains empty and external to the sphere of its realization. This adherence of the mechanical within the teleological should serve to dispel the appearance that mechanism merely disappears as if it were a form of objectivity no longer suited to the higher forms of the concept.

This grasp of how the logic of mechanism inheres in the dialectic of teleology provides a key to understanding the originality that Hegel gives to the theme of mechanism in his social philosophy: while thinkers prior to Hegel distinguished mechanism and teleology as anti-nomical objective systems, Hegel argues that a rational grasp of mechanism demonstrates the way in which mechanistic relations make up a part of teleology. By the same token, Hegel does not simply oppose the mechanistic aspects of society from the organic aspects as if they were two distinct possibilities: instead he seeks to argue that the truly integrated social whole will contain both moments, and that the very concept of the modern state can only be arrived at by considering how economic relations play a role in the actualization of freedom.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have made a series of arguments about the nature of mechanism in Hegel's logic: first, that mechanism must be considered a logical concept; second, that the initial concept of mechanism leads to a contradictory and flawed conception of self-determination; and third, that over the course of the moments of mechanical process and absolute mechanism, Hegel develops the conception of a system of mechanically ordered objects, logically deduced from the initial contradiction within the mechanical object, in which self-determination takes place in a manner that accounts for the relation between objects and their extrinsic system of organization. The mechanical object represents a form of objectivity in which the individual object defines its self-determination as resting in its indifference to the way in which it is determined by other objects. The absolute mechanism, however, consists in a system of externally related objects whose immanent determinations explain their relationships in a system of motion. As I have argued, this advance from mechanical object to absolute mechanism represents for Hegel not merely a higher level of physical complexity within the natural sciences, but a logical advance that will bear relevance for thinking about how humans are 'free' within modern social systems.

In concluding his treatment of absolute mechanism in both the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia* versions of the logic, Hegel gives a brief, but highly detailed description of the modern state as an absolute mechanism consisting in three syllogisms. This passage suggests an application of the structure of absolute mechanism to the realm of political philosophy, but this structure is not taken up in any specific way in Hegel's political writings. In order for these logical arguments to be fruitful, and in order for this suggestive passage to have any bearings on Hegel's conception of the state, it must be possible to explain not just how this structure can be mapped on to Hegel's political philosophy, but how it can be used to give a more coherent argumentative justification to Hegel's political program.

Chapter Five

The Modern State as Absolute Mechanism

Hegel's Logical Insight into the Relation of Civil Society and the State

In the previous chapter, I discussed the moment of absolute mechanism as a logical problem: I argued that absolute mechanism is for Hegel a way of thinking the nature of self-determination within an objective, mechanistic system. It became clear that the mechanistic object can only be thoroughly self-determining if it acts as part of a whole in which it mediates between the other parts of the whole and its own nature. But self-determination is also one of the central, supporting concepts in Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit, as developed in his *Philosophy of Right*. Here he argues that the legitimacy of the modern social and political institutions that he describes rests on the way in which they allow spirit to actualize itself, that we are only free in a substantial sense if we are 'with ourselves' in our actions, namely if we control our actions, recognize ourselves in them and actualize our faculties in them. Such self-determination can only be adequately grasped through an institutional analysis that describes the way in which social institutions such as the family, the economy and the state must operate so as to provide relations of recognition in which such willing is possible.

This notion that autonomy, according to Hegel, is only possible through participation in an ethical society has led many commentators to endorse a communitarian interpretation of Hegel: if the will only realizes itself through its participation in relations of mutual recognition, then this seems to privilege the cultural unity of the community over the rights of the individual.¹ It seems to favor the role of cultural and historical unity over the self-interested motives of the individual in a modern capitalist society. And yet I argued in Chapter Three that Hegel came to see serious flaws with the Romantic vision of an organic society, which represses or stifles the development of modern economic relations and the forms of subjectivity that go along with such relations. I argued that in Hegel's view, the role of the modern state is to give ethical meaning to the institutions of the modern

economy through regulation of the economy, rather than instill communal virtues such as those embodied in the Greek *polis*.

I believe that this realization from Hegel's 1802 writings is more or less formative of his later political philosophy. There is however an important difference in Hegel's thinking after the *Science of Logic*: while the 1802 texts describes a pattern in which the mechanistic could be taken up and included within the organic, I believe that departing from the *Science of Logic*, Hegel considers the manner in which mechanism can be considered as itself embodying a self-sustaining whole in which self-determination is possible. As I argued in the previous chapter, the thrust of Hegel's argument about mechanism in the logic consists in demonstrating how mechanism is capable of organizing itself into a rational whole while remaining essentially mechanistic, without at first passing over into teleology or organism. In Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, the organism is not a dominant metaphor or a fundamentally constitutive logical model for the way in which the modern state functions.² The state need no longer be considered as an organism that includes certain mechanistic functions, but rather as itself an 'absolute mechanism' in which the will actualizes itself. The logic of absolute mechanism will provide us with a way of thinking the notion of self-determination that is distinctive to modern economic and political life. This figure articulates the notion that, for Hegel, mechanism and freedom are not two mutually exclusive spheres, that mechanism has the inherent tendency to organize itself into a form of mechanism in which self-determination is possible in and through syllogistic patterns of inter-relation. However, work remains to be done in this chapter to show that this logical conceptualization of freedom within mechanism can be considered as the conceptual structure for the form of freedom that Hegel sees embodied in modern economic and political institutions.

Hegel's own work suggests an application of the figure of absolute mechanism to his political philosophy: his treatment of this figure in the *Science of Logic* (as well as in his *Encyclopedia* versions of the logic) culminates in a brief passage in which he explains the functions of the modern state as a pattern of syllogisms. But though Hegel uses the figure of the syllogism of syllogisms to describe the state in the *Science of Logic*, he does not explicitly bring it up in the *Philosophy of Right*. This provides for the challenge of exploring how this methodological device can be integrated into the problematic inherent to the *Philosophy of Right*. What is vital in this figure is that it allows us to think the co-existence, mutual implication and inter-penetration of different forms of mediation within a unified sphere. Not only are citizens mediated with the state to the degree that the state helps them realize their private interests, but also the citizens relate to their own

needs and wants through the form of universality that state life grants them. And the state in turn can only relate to the particular needs and wants of the individuals through the participation of the citizens. (Hence three syllogisms: Singular-Particular-Universal, Singular-Universal-Particular and Universal-Singular-Particular.) Dieter Henrich argues that this particular figure of the syllogism of syllogisms makes up the characteristically speculative aspect of Hegel's thought since it involves a totality governed by the principle of mutual implication and co-existence between diverse structures of mediation within a rational whole.³ One form of mediation does not cause the other, but each contains, implies the other, even though they are distinct and even paradoxical from the perspective of the understanding.⁴

If this figure of absolute mechanism from the logic is to be truly fruitful in a political context, then it cannot simply be a matter of mapping the schema of the syllogisms onto the schema of the institutions that Hegel describes (a project which Henrich tentatively undertakes). Instead, it must be possible to use the logical impetus opened up by the notion of absolute mechanism in order to address living interpretative problems in Hegel's social and political philosophy. Fortunately for us, there are plenty of such living problems in the interpretation of Hegel's social and political philosophy; in fact most of the interpretative difficulties in the literature of Hegel's political philosophy focus not on the objective nature of the institutions that Hegel describes, but on the relation between these institutions, how they interact with each other.

I believe that the logic of absolute mechanism provides an interpretative response to the following questions in scholarship on Hegel's social and political philosophy: a) What is Hegel's grasp of the social implications of the division of labor in the industrial economy? Is he an early critic of 'alienation' in the Marxist sense or just repeating rather common place points he had learned from political economy? b) What is Hegel's solution to the problem of poverty that he diagnoses in §241–254 of the *Philosophy of Right* as a structural tendency endemic to modern civil society? Is he describing an irresolvable problem in civil society here, or does he envision a solution through state intervention, either by regulating the market, or engaging in colonialism? c) How does Hegel conceive of the political representation of the interests of individuals within the state? Does his criticism of election practices simply amount to a limitation of the sovereignty of the people, or is his theory of representation more effective in conveying the will of the people to the legislative act?

It would be presumptive to expect to solve these three controversies here in the brief form that I will be dealing with them. But I believe it can be demonstrated that the logic of mediation contained in the absolute mechanism at

least allows a distinct approach to these issues that remains true to the intentions of Hegel's political philosophy and defends him from false alternatives that are often presented by interpreters. Thus before turning to the specific interpretive problems that I mentioned, I will lay out a more detailed conception of the logical structure of syllogisms that Hegel lays out in 'absolute mechanism.'

'EVERYTHING RATIONAL IS A SYLLOGISM'

First it must be clarified what Hegel means with his overall notion of syllogism. In treating the syllogisms in the logic he writes: "Everything rational is a syllogism."⁵ The form of the syllogism applies not in the first order to a set of propositions tied together to reach a conclusion, but to a conceptual structure in which the three moments of the concept (the universal, the particular and the singular) relate to each other, two terms being extremes and the other mediating between them. He argues that the syllogism is the *form* of the rational, but in so doing he means 'form' in a different sense than in a traditional conception of formal logic. For Hegel the form of the rational is not rational in abstraction from a rational content, for the rational form is the form that determines and penetrates its content. "It must be the case that logical reason, when it is taken in its formal capacity, can also be recognized in that reason that has to do with content; indeed, all content can only be rational through a rational form."⁶

For Hegel the discussion of the syllogisms provides a key to understanding the difference between finite content and truly rational content. The judgment (*Urteil*) provides the logical form for 'finite things,' for in finite things, the 'singular' and the 'universal' coexist in a manner that is indeterminate and separable. 'Socrates is a man' tells us what universal concept corresponds to Socrates, but it does not express what in Socrates allows him to be described in this way. Judgment holds the moments of the concept apart while identifying them through a medium that is not itself conceptual. The body and the soul coexist, but do not imply one another. But the syllogism relates two moments of the concept not through the mere copula, but through a further conceptual moment. In so doing it expresses, for example, the truth that the individual only becomes universal through particularity. The moments of the concept only relate to each other through the medium of each other.

Everything is concept, and its determinate being is the difference of the moments of the concept, so that its universal nature gives itself external reality through particularity, and by way of this reflection-in-itself makes

itself singular. Or on the other hand, the real is a singular that through particularity raises itself up to universality and makes itself identical with itself.⁷

The syllogism contains the form in which we must think individual things so as to make their individuality into a moment in a rational understanding of the real.

For Hegel what is rational in the syllogism is not just the fact of mediation, i.e. that one moment in the concept mediates between the two others, but the necessity in seeing each form of mediation as implying the others. In Hegel's logical account of the syllogisms, each of the syllogism forms is immanently related to the others, i.e. the basic form of the syllogism (S-P-U) generates the others. The syllogism really only explains its own act of mediation when the *middle term* is so concrete that it includes the whole concept within it: for example, the true 'singular' is one that can posit its distinguishing 'particularity' in a way such that it relates itself to the entire sphere of action that gives it this particularity, whereas only the abstract singular is not yet marked by any distinguishing particularity. Thus the 'concrete singular,' as opposed to the abstract singular, is one that already contains the moments of particularity and universality in it. Only this concrete singular can then act as a mediating term in the syllogism 'particular-singular-universal.' But the singular is only thought as concrete in this way through the fact that it has already undergone mediation in the other two syllogisms: S-U-P and S-P-U. Singularity goes from being an 'extreme' (i.e. an isolated conceptual determination) to a mediating concept through the positing of the other two syllogisms in which it is an extreme. "It belongs among the most important logical insights that a determinate moment that, when taken in opposition, is an extreme, ceases to be such and becomes an organic moment in that it is taken as a middle term."⁸ Hegel's argument here is that the middle term always has to be thought as a result of prior mediation in another syllogism, and that only through this concretion can it in turn serve to make the other moments concrete. Thus it is only able to act as a real mediating term if it is thought not in isolation from the other syllogisms, but as the result of them. The same applies to the moments of particularity and universality. In approaching any syllogism that Hegel lays out it is important to understand that the middle term has a distinct logical status from the two extremes: the extremes are taken as forms of abstract conceptual moments, while the middle term is thought as having passed through the two other syllogisms. Thus the term 'S' in S-P-U is a singular thing that is not yet defined in its relation to a whole through its particular nature (indeed, this is what is to be accomplished through this

sylogism, as its result); but in the syllogism, U-S-P, the term 'S' is thought of as a singular thing that has recognized or posited its relation to the entirety of things by means of particularity.

This notion of three syllogisms, each acting in order to explain and make good on the conceptual demands of the other, is for Hegel a key insight into the nature of the concept. It gives Hegel a pattern for thinking real, systematic wholes throughout the rest of his philosophy. "It is only through the nature of syllogizing (*die Natur des Zusammenschliessens*), through this triplicity of syllogisms of the same terminorum, that an entirety is truly grasped in its organization."⁹ It is at first important to understand this structure as a definition of what makes something rationally self-determining within objectivity according to Hegel. A finite thing is one which is not able to posit its middle term, for example, not able to mediate between its individual existence and its universal nature. But this finite thing takes on a new meaning when it belongs to a structure of activity in which it can explain or posit from its own activity the relation between its existence and its universal nature through its relations to the sphere around it. Through this mode of explanation, the originally finite thing is no longer simply a given nature, but it is one that posits its own nature through its relating to the systematic context of its activity. This distinction between finite existence and rational self-determination has vital implications for Hegel's political philosophy. Here Hegel is concerned with demonstrating that human freedom is only made possible through participation in the right kinds of social and political institutions. The question of human freedom or self-determination thus becomes developed by raising the question, what social institutions allow us to 'be with ourselves'? Which institutions make the volitional activity by which we give content to our will a real relation to self that does not get lost in meaningless indeterminacy or become dependent on an externality that is altogether foreign? The project of describing human freedom through an account of the rational structure of institutions thus finds its logical justification for Hegel in his model of how syllogisms relate to form an objective whole. But this basic point about the nature of self-determination within rational systems will get fleshed out much more thoroughly in looking at how Hegel relates this structure of absolute mechanism to the state.

THE ABSOLUTE MECHANISM: THE STATE AND SOCIETY AS A SYLLOGISM OF SYLLOGISMS

In the previous chapter I argued that the function of the moment of 'absolute mechanism' in Hegel's logic is to develop within the sphere of objective, non-teleological relations a conception of a rational whole in which the individual

objects can be thought of as self-determining. Hegel's notion of the absolute mechanism bears a clear analogy to planetary mechanics, and this makes it all the more surprising when instead of working out an example along these lines, he uses the structure of syllogisms to describe the relation of society and the state. In the passage on absolute mechanism from the *Logic*, Hegel gives the following formulation of the application of this syllogistic structure to the state:

Thus the government, the individual citizens and the needs or the external life of the individuals are three terms, of which each is the mediating term for the other two. The government is the absolute center, in which the extreme of the individual is mediated with its external existence; equally, the individuals are a middle term, which activate that universal individual [i.e. the government] to external existence and translate its ethical essence into the extreme of reality. The third syllogism is the formal one, the syllogism of appearance, that the individuals are joined to this universal absolute individuality by their needs,—a syllogism, which since it is merely subjective passes over into the others and has its truth in them.¹⁰

Thus we have three syllogisms out of which Hegel tries to grasp the rational structure of the state:

1. S-U-P

This syllogism describes the fact that individuals only attain to the satisfaction of their particular desires as family members and civic individuals through the activity of the government. As I will argue later, this syllogism describes the role of those state institutions that act to resolve the inherent deficiencies of the market, namely the 'public authority' and the 'corporations,' as well as the 'administration of justice.' Hegel's notion is that even our basic identity as family members and workers and consumers assumes a system of justice and mechanisms of market regulation. Thus though the state comes last in Hegel's exposition, it had to be there all along to make possible his account of the family and civil society.

2. U-S-P

This syllogism describes the fact that the government can only act correctly on the sphere of market factors if it acts in a way that is 'representative' of the interests of the members of the state. The middle term of singularity is the factor of political representation in Hegel's conception of the internal

constitution. Of course, Hegel rejects the notion of representation through direct voting on laws or elected officials, and believes that the individual only gains a real substantial voice in the state through organizations that represent his economic identity within the whole. Thus the 'singular' that Hegel has in mind here is the 'concrete singular,' one which has a differentiated functional identity within a social whole.

3. S-P-U

This syllogism describes the manner in which the individual comes to relate to the universal through the pursuit of its 'needs,' that is, its economic self-interest. In the modern state, individuals feel that the state is an extension of their selves only because it serves to promote their vital interests as family members and workers and consumers. But as I will argue, this syllogism stands for the formative aspect of civil society. Civil society's function within a rational conception of the state is that it serves to form our desires and sensuous natures in accordance with social standards, and in so doing, it serves as a precondition for the formation of a general will in political bodies.

In the text that follows Hegel singles out this third syllogism as having a merely instrumental significance relative to the other two: "The relations of pressure, attraction, repulsion and the like, as well as aggregation or mixture belong to the relation of externality, which makes up the third of the above treated syllogisms."¹¹ Thus Hegel subsumes the entirety of the hitherto mechanism (as well as the not yet treated chemism, apparent in the terms attraction and mixture) under the third syllogism. By doing so, he accounts for the presence of such relations in a rational whole, while demonstrating that such relations 'pass over' into a more comprehensive system of mediation. Hence the mechanism of the system of needs surpasses itself to the degree that it culminates in a first syllogistic form, since even the ability to account for relations of aggregation in a syllogistic form means placing them in the context of a rational whole that is not merely an aggregation. Thus from a logical point of view the same can be said of civil society that has just been said of the third syllogism: that it is a realm of 'appearance,' that the entire relations of 'externality' (pressure, attraction, repulsion, aggregation, but here thought as objective spirit) can be subsumed under this sphere, and that this sphere 'passes over' into that of the other two syllogisms. In what follows, I will try to make sense of what is implied in this 'passing over' from the syllogism of externality to the other two.

In Hegel's later *Encyclopedia* versions of the logic, he develops the same analogy between the absolute mechanism and the state, and he lays out the same set of syllogisms, but with one difference in his exposition: he reverses

the order of the syllogisms, so that the instrumental syllogism (S-P-U) comes first and the syllogism of necessity comes last (S-U-P).¹² Thus the *Science of Logic* begins with the most concrete form of mediation, i.e. the relation of individuals to themselves through the state, and progresses to the most abstract, the mediation of the individuals and the state through their needs, while the later versions of the *Encyclopedia* begin from the abstract and move to the concrete. What could be made of this minor change? Hegel wrote the *Science of Logic* well before he had worked out his mature *Philosophy of Right* in systematic form, while the later *Encyclopedia* was prepared after Hegel's intense devotion to this subject in his Berlin years. Thus the *Science of Logic* version begins with a vision of a concrete, social-political entirety and breaks it down to its more abstract constituent parts, since it has no real motive of developing an exegetical account of this rational entirety. But Hegel's later version is informed by his account of ethicality in the *Philosophy of Right*, in which Hegel seeks to move from the more abstract form of ethicality to the more realized; i.e. he 'deduces' the concept of the state from out of the contradictions of civil society.¹³ In what follows, I will treat the syllogisms in the order of the *Encyclopedia*, arguing that the syllogism of appearance represents the moment of need and work in civil society, the syllogism of necessity (S-U-P) points towards the state intervention in the economy, and the syllogism of reflection (U-S-P) points towards the nature of representation that Hegel considers indispensable in the state. Although the passage from the *Science of Logic* already makes explicit a relation to each of these subject matters, the passage from the *Encyclopedia* orders the syllogisms in such a manner as to allow us to reconstruct their application to Hegel's mature *Philosophy of Right*. But although my account will begin rather than end with the 'syllogism of mere externality' it is important to maintain Hegel's cautionary note from the *Science of Logic* that this form of mediation is the most abstract, most 'mechanistic' and is dependent upon the other two as their result, for this will also apply for the position of civil society within Hegel's account of ethicality.

In what follows, I must emphasize once again that it is not my goal simply to map the syllogistic structure developed here onto the structure of Hegel's account of ethicality in his mature *Philosophy of Right*. Though this might be possible, it would explain very little, either in terms of Hegel's logical justification for the progression of syllogisms, or in terms of straightening out the social and political problems and ambiguities in Hegel's account. Instead of simply mapping the syllogisms onto the account of institutions, I will raise problems that I take to be living problems in Hegel's social and political philosophy and use the notion of absolute mechanism, as far as possible, to

provide a clarification of Hegel's response to the problem in question. The purpose of the *Philosophy of Right* is to describe the right kinds of social and political institutions, not in terms of their historical or factual existence, but in terms of their *rational* nature. Thus each of the syllogisms is concerned with giving an account of the concrete nature of the middle term: civil society is not interested in simply describing the nature of particular desire, but the rationality through which particular desires become socially valuable. By the same token, political representation does not simply happen through the individual will having its say by voting, but through a very particular kind of social system in which the individual has its economic identity represented in the government. So each of the syllogisms only gives a real *critical* account of the sphere in question when the middle term is taken not in abstraction from, but in relation to, the other two syllogisms.

1) THE SYSTEM OF NEEDS AND WORK AS THE PRE-FORMATION OF THE UNIVERSAL WILL (S-P-U)

The term particularity in Hegel's social philosophy has two distinct yet related meanings: on the one hand it is that which distinguishes a member of society functionally from all others (the individual's particular position within the division of labor), and on the other it is also the drives or inclinations in the subject that could be construed as 'selfish,' as setting the interests of the individual off from the common interests of society. This first syllogism clearly relates to the manner in which individuals, by cultivating and pursuing particularity in both meanings, gain a kind of ethical 'formation' that prepares them for political existence.

Hegel begins his account of civil society by giving a conceptual analysis of how human beings satisfy their 'external needs,' i.e. their particular desires. Thus Hegel begins the section with an explication of the concept of need, in which he argues that human needs are by their nature indeterminate. Humans do, of course, have to satisfy their natural needs, but there is for humans always also some measure of 'artificial' need that must be met as well. He argues contra to Rousseau's hypothesis of a state of nature in asserting that it is the nature of human desire never to be fully satisfied with an immediate gratification. "It is in the end not the need, but one's opinion that must be satisfied."¹⁴ There is always a moment of intellectual reflection mixed in with our desire, and it is this reflective aspect that humans seek to satisfy. This leads to a process in human culture by which desires are constantly susceptible to 'multiplication': the circle of needs that humans must fulfill in order to have a satisfying life is not a 'closed circle' like the needs of the animal,¹⁵ but

dependent on the social context, which is to say, on what has been invented, and what other people in society have. Further Hegel argues that our needs "are a being for others,"¹⁶ that they can be augmented and manipulated by others in society, who have an interest in instilling new needs. The motor for the multiplication of needs is not so much our own reflection on what we want, but the need that others have to find people who are dependent upon their products.¹⁷

This dependency of humans upon others to meet their needs points to the concept of 'work.' Hegel argues that because our need is not a naturally confined need, but a socially determined one, we find ourselves in the position of having to depend upon the work of others to meet our needs. But we can only expect others to meet our needs in that we are useful to them in some way as well. Hegel argues that within this social context of people working to meet each others needs, there is an inherent tendency towards a greater division of labor. The production of a given object is more efficient if multiple workers break down the production process into smaller and more simple steps, because these small, abstract steps in the labor process can be performed with greater dexterity and rapidity in that the worker does not have to think in order to perform the specialized task.

In the course of explicating the concepts of need and work, Hegel demonstrates an awareness of the social problems associated with the multiplication of artificial wants and the division of labor. On the one hand, the multiplication of socially produced needs leads to a state in which humans are never completely satisfied, because the mechanism by which new needs are cultivated runs faster than their ability to satisfy them. Further as these new needs are produced, large segments of society are not in a position to hope of ever having access to the means for meeting these needs (more on this in the next section on poverty). On the other hand, the increasing division of labor makes the actual working process into one that dulls the subjectivity of the worker by removing the aspect of thought from the physical execution of production.¹⁸ He calls such work an '*Abstumpfung*' of the worker, a destructive numbing process, and points to the fact that workers in industrial economies fall radically below the level of culture and education of the society around them.

Readers have debated where to situate this section in Hegel's account of modern society. Marxist readings have emphasized that Hegel saw socially and ethically disastrous consequences in these tendencies exemplified by free market economies, and they compare Hegel's comments on the '*Abstumpfung*' of the worker through increasingly mechanized labor to the early Marx's conception of the alienation of labor.¹⁹ Yet these Marxist readings also

highlight that although Hegel sees the problem of the alienation of labor, he has no solution to it. Thus they either suggest that Hegel's social philosophy is one of resignation in the face of de-humanizing tendencies of economic development, or that Hegel simply leaves the problem open without being able to solve it. In opposition to this reading by Marxist scholars, others have demonstrated that Hegel's grasp of the social and ethical position of the industrial worker in the labor process is already prefigured by Adam Smith and John Stuart.²⁰ This reading suggests that Hegel's critical grasp of the mechanization of labor is for him, as for the political economists, "a mere aside" in his overall account of the benefits reaped from the division of labor.²¹ According to this reading, although Hegel sees the problem of the dulling of the subjectivity of the worker, he believes that this problem can be somewhat alleviated through certain political measures, and that even if it can't be fully solved, the worker is better off through the process of economic growth engendered by the division of labor.

What both of these readings of this issue have in common is that they compare this section to a prevailing economic theory without raising the issue of what place this section has in Hegel's overall account of 'ethicality.' Certainly, Hegel's grasp of the economic tendencies of modern society is informed directly by his reading of the political economists, and there is little in his approach that is original. But where Hegel differs from the political economists is in his assessment of the ethical meaning of the development of luxuries and of the division of labor. Hegel develops a poignant critique of political economy in §§187 before introducing the economic materials that he works through in the 'system of needs.' This critique must be taken into account before simply asserting that Hegel agreed with the political economists on the solution to the ethical problems posed by the mechanization of labor. But it is just as important to see that the Marxist charge towards Hegel that he is resigned to accept the plight of the worker, or that his system has no resources to solve this plight, rests on an equally abstract reading of the context of this section in the overall work. In what follows, I will attempt to fill in the gap left in both of these readings by placing the system of needs in its proper conceptual context to the rest of Hegel's account of ethicality.

In the Remark to §§187 Hegel gives a highly truncated critique of two conceptions of economic development: that of Rousseau and another alternative that seems to be that of political economy, though Hegel does not name it as such. What both models share, Hegel criticizes, is that they understand economic development as completely abstract from humankind's moral development. While Rousseau considers the social and economic development of culture to be something altogether artificial that corrupts

human nature, the economist has a tendency to view the development of industry as a mere means to meeting human needs, as if these needs were the end in themselves. "The one view as much as the other demonstrates a lack of acquaintance with the nature of spirit and the aim of reason."²² The correct perspective, Hegel here argues, is to view the development of industrial processes not as a means towards living a more prosperous existence, nor as a mere corruption of human nature that introduces dissatisfaction into a pristine state of existence, but to view this development as having an end in terms of the ethical formation of human subjectivity. A rational account of history does not take material prosperity as the standard for understanding the purpose of economic developments, though this was indeed the goal of the individual actors who created these innovations. The rational purpose of historical developments for Hegel must be disassociated from the subjective purposes of the actors. The real goal of reason in the development of industry for Hegel is that human nature is changed through this process, a process that Hegel will describe as the 'formation (*Bildung*) of the subjectivity of the individual.' This, in my view, gives us a crucial key as to how Hegel wants us to read the economic developments that I described above from the system of needs: Hegel views these economic developments as valuable and ethically justified only insofar as they represent a kind of formation of the human spirit. In what follows, I will argue that this 'formation' is for Hegel only important because it plays a vital role in making political institutions possible.²³

In the system of needs, Hegel gives a specific account of the ways in which both the evolution of the needs of the individual and the evolution of the labor process lead to formation of the subjectivity of the individual. In cultivating artificial needs, or the subjective inclination towards a more luxurious form of life, humans become more dependent on things external to them, things which are the result of a complicated labor process rather than mere natural products. But on the other hand, these evolving desires are structured no longer just by instinct or natural need, but by the social relation between consumer and producer. Further, the dependence on luxury means that one depends not just on nature to satisfy one's needs, but on something that is the result of a social process, and so one relates to society in feeling one's needs, rather than relating to something wholly foreign, as nature is. Thus in a somewhat paradoxical manner, Hegel considers the artificial needs of historical humans to be 'concrete needs,'²⁴ while merely natural needs are abstract, since only our social needs can be taken up and made part of an account of how humans relate to each other in ethical institutions.

The labor process also forms human subjectivity, and here Hegel develops two distinct points. On the one hand, the process of refining the means

of production leads to a kind of 'theoretical formation,' an ability to distinguish and compare the nature of external objects more quickly and in more refined ways. On the other hand, work leads to the 'habit of activity' (§§197), to becoming subjectively accustomed to responding to the bidding of others and paying attention to the objective nature of the product rather than just one's own subjective inclinations.

In both kinds of 'formation,' the refinement of needs and the refinement of one's theoretical abilities and practical attitude, what changes is the subject's sensual nature, its inclinations, desires, the way in which it defines its self-interest. This aspect of the subject is what Hegel calls our 'particularity' as subjects. Thus Hegel's point is that if we set out to study the way in which humans gratify their selfish drives in a truly concrete way, then we see that these drives are always infected by a form of universality, that the internal teleology of this 'particularity' leads the subject to involvement with the world in which the subject is similar to others, dependent upon others and willing to suspend the gratification of its particularity for the sake of others.

From here it is important to remember the nature of the syllogism that Hegel uses to grasp this system of needs:

The third syllogism is the formal one, the syllogism of appearance, that the individuals are joined to this universal absolute individuality by their needs.²⁵

The *individual* (the person) syllogizes itself through its *particularity* (the physical and mental needs, the development of which is given in civil society) together with its *universal* (society, right, law, the government).²⁶

One of the most important points to elucidate about any syllogism is that the act of mediation can only occur if the middle term is concrete. Thus in this case, the system of needs must be taken as a definition of how the element of *particularity* in the subject becomes so concrete that it includes its own immanent relation to a form of *universality*. And only when this particularity in the individual is made concrete can it serve to do what the above syllogism demands of it: that it act as a mediating factor between the individual and the political totality (which Hegel has not yet described by this point in the *Philosophy of Right*, but which he assumes to be in place). So even though this syllogism does not describe the state, it describes an aspect of economic existence that must be presupposed in order to make state life possible.

'Civil society' is important to Hegel because it gives us a more correct understanding of the nature of 'particularity' than the perspective of natural drives or the perspective of Eudaimonism. If we construe the 'particularity,' i.e. the selfishness, of the subject in terms of natural drives, then this is something that the subject has in no way determined in and through its own activity. It is a mere given to which the subject responds. Hegel gives a critique of philosophical Eudaimonism at the end of his account of subjective spirit (§§479, 480), where he argues that Eudaimonism puts the subject in the position of reflecting externally on the set of drives and inclinations that it finds merely given within it, so as to seek a more steady kind of satisfaction. The problem with this perspective is that it does not give an account of how the subject's inclinations are formed and how they are intimately bound up with the nature of thought, and so the thinking subject can never be self-determining in acting on its chosen goal. Thus only an account of economic activity that includes the aspect of formation can serve to make the factor of self-interested desire into something that mediates between the individual and the broader ethical world in which the individual lives.

Reading this notion of concrete particularity in terms of its function in the syllogism makes clear that the goal of Hegel's account of the system of needs points beyond the actual satisfaction of needs: the syllogism demonstrates that the real rational element in economic activity is the way in which it puts individuals in a position to participate in political life. Hegel makes clear in his account of civil society that the "interest of the idea" in this sphere is "the formation of the subjectivity of the individual." What must be elucidated through the syllogism, however, is that this formation is really at the service of moments that Hegel has not yet laid out in this part of his account of civil society, for it is a formation of the individual *in relation to the state*. This economic formation of self-interest in the system of needs represents a kind of *pre-formation* of the universal will that makes political existence possible. This form of mediation is so important to the state because the state, as the realization of a whole that Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*, requires citizens that are formed through and through by their own activities to act in a way that is consistent with the demands of a differentiated yet cohesive whole. Individuals do not give up or forget their selfish interests in adopting the perspective of the general will; rather even in their experience of their own interests, they have already adopted forms of thought and behavior that relate them to the general functioning of the state. Thanks to the inner workings of civil society, even the wants and needs of individuals have an element of universality to them, a relation to the general will. This is not to say that this economically concrete form

of self-interest is itself a truly universal will that could result in a satisfactory account of how a sovereign people determines itself in its political acts; but such political acts (which will be described in another syllogism) assume subjects whose self-interests are 'formed.'

This insight into 'the interest of the idea' in civil society distinguishes Hegel from the political economists: the value of economic development in civil society is not that it meets peoples needs in an ever more efficient way, but that it changes the very nature of these wants and the very nature of the way in which humans think and feel. The measure of the success of civil society rests not in its ability to sustain itself and produce greater wealth, but in the degree to which it 'forms' individuals, and in a sense, makes them into something other than the subject of civil society.

By the same token, this grasp of the system of needs as the first out of three syllogisms points towards a response to the Marxist charge that Hegel is resigned to accept the ethical problems inherent in the mechanization of labor. If the true purpose of the system of needs is not to provide satisfaction of our sensual nature, but to prepare citizens for political life in a determinate manner, then the solution to the ethical problems that Hegel diagnoses within this first system cannot be fully elucidated within this sphere. But the question must be left open whether this impasse is not addressed in one of the latter syllogisms. Marx asserts in his reading of the *Philosophy of Right* that Hegel simply sublates the contradictory aspect of one sphere right up into the next, thus leaving it intact without really transforming what is alienating about it.²⁷ But if we read each sphere as a syllogism that assumes and logically implies the coexistence of other syllogisms to make its own action complete, then this calls into question whether the system of needs can be taken as a sphere that is ever really intact and without regulation from another sphere.²⁸ The Marxist reading conceptualizes Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* as a hierarchical set of social-political systems that coexist without interference, whereas the syllogistic model that I am developing points towards patterns of interaction and conceptual implication between the spheres represented by the respective syllogisms.

As I will make clear in discussing the next two syllogisms, in Hegel's view of a truly rational state the system of needs is formed by the individuals relation to the corporation and to the state, just as much as these spheres assume the formation of the individual through the system of needs. In Hegel's account of civil society, he conceptualizes each member of civil society as having two distinct aspects to his or her identity: besides just being a worker and a consumer, one is always equally a member of a corporation and a citizen in a state with a representative government. Hegel leaves open

the possibility for these further institutions to interfere and regulate aspects of the system of needs that are ethically problematic. Indeed, he even argues that the goal of the state in regulating the economy is not just the overall harmony or prosperity of the economy, but the ethical needs of the concrete individual. Thus far from being resigned to accepting the ethically alienating aspects of the industrial economy, Hegel is intent on separating the positive contribution of this sphere from the negative, so as to make possible the articulation of a separate logical moment that is capable of addressing these alienating aspects without merely repeating them.

2) THE ACTION OF THE GOVERNMENT WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY (S-U-P)

The prior syllogism considered economic activities from a positive ethical view, that is to say, it looked at how the pursuit of self-interest is a vital component in forming the ethical and political subjectivity of citizens within the state. But this syllogism, which posits universality as the middle term, will consider the manner in which the state must step in to deal with the ethical problems that result out of the system of needs. For Hegel there is a fundamental conceptual problem posed by the very nature of the system of needs: though the system of needs allows individuals to pursue their needs in ever more developed ways, the satisfaction of these needs remains abandoned to chance and is never guaranteed by mere economic progress. Hegel describes a mechanism by which the pursuit of ever greater wealth in the system of needs goes along with the generation of poverty in which people are deprived of their basic sense of humanity. For Hegel this is symptomatic of an ethical problem at the heart of free market economies, and he argues instead for a kind of civil society in which individuals have the right to have their 'particularity' satisfied, i.e. the right to security of property *as well as* the right not to live in poverty or without employment.²⁹ Far from being resigned to accept the ethical shortfalls of the free-market economy, as Marxist critics charge, Hegel makes the radical claim that the particular well-being of the individual must be treated as a right by the state.

Put in conceptual terms, the relationship between S-P in the prior S-P-U syllogism remains completely abstract and mediated by mere external chance, and this lack must be filled in with a truly concrete mediating moment. This leads us to the syllogism S-U-P, which considers the notion that individuals in a rational state attain to the realization of their economic needs through the mediation of political structures. There are several political structures that function in this way for Hegel: on the one hand, the

administration of right protects commerce by ensuring personhood and property, while the 'public authority' and 'corporations' go further and protect the individual against poverty and economic uncertainty. This structure gives us a key to understanding the patriotism particular to modern states: it is not founded on the unconditional self-sacrifice that marked the patriotism of citizens in the ancient *polis* (the political virtues discussed in the second chapter), but on the sense that citizens have that their state enables them to realize their goals as family members, workers and consumers.

In treating this syllogism, I will set aside the issue of the 'administration of right' (though this clearly belongs under this syllogism) in order to deal with the more vexing issue in Hegel's account of the mediation of the individual with particularity: his articulation of the problem of large scale poverty that is generated by economic development within the system of needs and his attempt at a solution. I will argue that Hegel sees the solution to this problem as resting in political intervention in the economy at several different levels. Hegel's theory of economic intervention is rather unspecific in his texts, and has led to many conflicting interpretations. He lists several ways the state can address the economic problems of its citizens, but he also demonstrates an awareness that these solutions often back-fire and have negative consequences. Hegel's largest concern is one that was evident even in his earliest texts on the subject: how can the state intervene in the economy without robbing the citizens of their sense of freedom, and without infringing on the 'formation' of citizens through the system of needs? The key to answering this question, I will argue, is to grasp the act of political intervention in this syllogism as a form of 'concrete universality,' as a true form of universality that has been arrived at through the other conceptual moments. Only through intervention in the economy by a truly representative political structure can the citizens retain their subjective freedom and their economic formation in participating in an economy that is regulated.

Hegel understands poverty as a social phenomenon that is bound to increase in proportion to economic development; it is not the result of a failure in the system of needs, but is endemic to the development of this system as it was described in the previous section. Increasing division of labor leads to economic dependence of workers on market contingencies, and also to overproduction. This leads then to unemployment on a massive scale, which is all the more problematic in that the worker has become, through the mechanization of the labor process, so specialized that he or she can no longer adapt as easily. Further, in that the level of luxury or artificial need progressively increases, the gap becomes greater between the subsistence level of the poor and the general level of what counts as a satisfactory life within a culture.

Hegel specifies that this structural tendency towards poverty culminates in the existence of a 'rabble' (*Pöbel*), a term that he uses to designate a class that lives below the subsistence level of their general culture and feels a sense of injustice towards the more fortunate classes and towards the state itself. They cannot through their own labor raise themselves to the level of luxury that other classes enjoy, and yet they feel entitled to this luxury as their 'right.' "Poverty itself does not make anyone into rabble: this comes into being only through the disposition connected with poverty, through the inner loathing towards the rich, towards society, the government, etc."³⁰ Hegel makes clear that this class in society, which lives without the basic benefits of society, is justified in claiming that its rights are violated by society, and Hegel comes as close as ever to defending a right to revolution for this class: "No human being can claim rights (*Rechte*) towards nature, but in the state of society, this deprivation takes on the form of an injustice (*Unrecht*), which is committed against this or that class."³¹ For Hegel to speak of a violation of the rights in the case of the rabble is not necessarily a justification for this class to revolt, but it *does* imply that a fully rationalized state cannot tolerate the existence of such a class, and must step in to prevent the formation of this class.

This discussion of the 'injustice' that is contained in the existence of extreme poverty serves as the point of departure for Hegel's discussion of the political institutions that intervene in the action of the economy, the public authority and the corporations. Scholars have disagreed on where in Hegel's account the solution to the problem of poverty really lies, and whether he even really intends to provide a solution to this ethical crisis in modern society. In a key passage from §§245, Hegel describes several ways in which the state can redistribute wealth, and he finds each of them lacking: if the state simply taxes the wealthy and gives the money to the poor, then the material lack on the part of the poor will be met, but not through their own work. Thus their sense of being able to provide for themselves will be injured, which Hegel sees to be a central motive to civil society. On the other hand, if the state provides extra labor opportunities for the poor, then the overall productivity of society will increase and thus intensify the original problem of overproduction. Hegel concludes this paragraph with the chilling statement: "In this way it becomes evident that even with its excessive wealth civil society is not wealthy enough to avert excessive poverty and the generation of a rabble."³² This leads Avineri and other scholars to the conclusion that for Hegel poverty represents an unsolvable problem within modern society and that the measures which the state can take to repair the situation are insufficient truly to mitigate the problem.³³

Yet Hegel's account of the role of the government in the economy does not end at §§245, and other scholars have focused on later points in Hegel's account of the public authority and corporations in order to demonstrate that Hegel does indeed provide a solution to the problem of poverty within civil society. Some scholars focus on Hegel's discussion of colonization in §§246–248 and emphasize that Hegel saw the main solution to the economic contradictions of the industrial economy to consist in economic expansion towards other parts of the globe, in order to open up new markets for overproduced goods. Yet here too Hegel is skeptical of this solution, seeing in it at best a temporary one, since the colonized countries are bound to develop economically and claim their own independence. Stephen Houlgate provides a more compelling account of Hegel's solution to the impasse of poverty, in arguing that the corporations provide the real ethical resolution to this problem.³⁴

Hegel understands the 'corporations' as state-sanctioned organizations of members of a certain branch of industry, somewhat akin to the antiquated notion of a guild. All the members of a given branch, both owners and workers are members of the corporation, which regulates the production, hiring, and training processes that relate to a given industry. Hegel seems to imply that the corporations operate in a relatively democratic way, giving all the members of the organization a chance to vote on and determine important decisions. As Houlgate makes clear in his account, the corporations can help to avert many of the dangerous aspects of free market economies that Hegel has laid out, by giving their members job security, controlling production levels, prices, and the number of workers in an industry. Further, Hegel emphasizes the ethical importance of these corporations in that they allow the members of an industry to perceive a common interest and to feel that they have a recognized identity as workers in a socially useful role.

According to Houlgate, the main distinction between being a member of a corporation and a citizen of a state is that the former is a voluntary identity, while being a citizen is not. Hence he argues that corporations provide their members with a kind of 'freedom' in relation to the decisions of the corporation that the state does not provide. Although Houlgate acknowledges that Hegel allows the state to intervene in a more direct way in the economy, he sees the corporations as the real solution to the impasse laid out in Hegel's account of the public authority (§§245), mainly because the corporations allow for a kind of control of the economy that is immanent to the members of civil society that are effected by regulation. Thus the corporations preserve the self-determination inherent to economic activity, while at the same time translating this self-determination into an ethical sphere, where individuals

are no longer just occupied with their own particular needs, but with the universal well-being, at least of a particular branch of society.

Houlgate is certainly right to emphasize the strong ethical role that Hegel attributes to the corporations, and he raises a very important issue by specifying the importance of the issue of self-determination to Hegel's account of economic interventionism. Any account of how political action solves the impasse of poverty must at the same time preserve the aspect of 'formation' that comes through the system of needs, and must take account of the fact that for Hegel the rational purpose of economic activity is not to provide for material needs, but to form the identity of individuals through their own activity. But in my view, Houlgate's account of the role of the corporations goes astray when he attributes to the corporations a kind of self-determination that is not possible in state actions. The state is for Hegel that form of self-determination that is most realized and includes all of the other forms that have been described throughout *Sittlichkeit*. Thus the way in which corporations regulate the economy cannot be understood without taking account of the relation between the corporations and the greater authority of the state; and it is equally important to make clear the sense in which even the actions of the 'public authority' must be considered as deriving from the freedom of the members of civil society.

For Hegel the distinction between the public authority and the corporations is that the 'public authority' pursues the general interests of society as a whole, while the corporations are specific to a certain economic sector. Thus some of the functions that Hegel assigns to the public authority are the construction of large infrastructure projects, the inspection of consumer goods, the creation of poor houses and welfare institutions, as well as taxation and price control. Hegel calls the kind of order that the public authority gives to civil society 'merely external' and this forms the basis of Houlgate's claim that the public authority is not an expression of the workers' own activity in the same way as the corporations. But it must be clarified what Hegel means by stating that the public authority is 'merely external' to civil society: the actions undertaken by the public authority are not directly in the service of any one particular need of the members of civil society, for no single member of civil society benefits so much from the construction of a system of highways that one would undertake it alone. If any individual did have such an interest in the projects of the public authority, then the public authority would not be necessary. The actions undertaken by the public authority are only beneficial to the particular needs of the individual insofar as these particular needs are bound to universal economic structures. But it is important to remember that in Hegel's account of ethicality, our identity

is not exhausted by the form of particularity elucidated in the family and the system of needs. He also assumes all along that individuals are citizens in a state with a representative form of government. Although the actions of the government do not directly express my particularity as a worker or consumer, this particularity is vitally bound up with my identity as a citizen of a representative government (as I will argue in more depth in the next section). Hence the actions of the public authority might be external to the individual taken just as a worker or consumer. But as a citizen who knows its particularity to be bound up with an greater functioning whole, the actions of the public authority must still be considered as a form of self-determination. Thus the difference between the corporations and the public authority is not the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy, as Houlgate claims, but rather the distinction between a form of self-determination in which the particularity of the individual is directly represented within a concrete economic sphere and a form of self-determination in which the particularity of the individual is expressed through the mediation of a legislative act in regards to the entire national economy. Both forms of political expression are crucial to Hegel, and the one could not function adequately without the other. Thus while Houlgate introduces a very fruitful theme by raising the issue of self-determination in relation to Hegel's theory of economic intervention, he does not adequately take account of how broader actions of state intervention must always be assumed to be the actions of a state that 'represents' the rational interests of its citizens.

From here it must also be possible to consider the fact that corporations are vitally bound up with the state in their functioning. In order for a corporation to exist, it does not suffice that a mass of individuals depend on a form of production to subsist; this form of production must also be 'substantial' in Hegel's terminology, that is, its products must be of such a nature that they represent a stable and valuable contribution to the system of needs. Thus the existence of the corporation is justified not just by the dependence of the workers on their work, but also by the dependence of society on the form of production. This is the prime difference between Hegel's theory of corporations and the historical reality of guilds as economic organizations that were largely obsolete by Hegel's time: while the guilds 'ossify' in Hegel's terminology and simply seek to perpetuate the stability of a form of industry, the corporations must be responsive to the needs of an evolving society.³⁵ This distinction between guilds and corporations, which is often ignored in accounts of Hegel's notion of corporations, implies in my view that corporations must always be thought of as existing in relations of mutual communication with a more universal form of political deliberation,

such as the public authority. Hegel provides the basis for such a structure of communication between the corporations and the state in §§289, where he argues that the corporations must be sanctioned by the state, and that the corporations should serve as means for nominating advisors to the state on economic affairs.

My central argument concerning the notion of political intervention in Hegel's theory of civil society is that the intervening factor must have the conceptual structure of 'concrete universality.' In my view, the emphasis in Hegel's theory of state intervention is not on what measures the state undertakes or their economic efficacy, but on the political nature of how it undertakes them. Hegel gives many examples in the text of how the state regulates the economy, such as commissioning infrastructure projects, taxing, setting up welfare institutions, inspecting consumer products, sanctioning certain corporations, colonizing so as to open up markets. In one place he even argues that the fighting of wars provides an inadvertent regulatory mechanism to the economy. The point seems to be that each of these measures provides only a temporary and relative solution to the growth of poverty. But Hegel's real concern is that these on-going acts of regulation happen in a way that does not undermine the aspect of formation that happens through the system of needs, and also that they do not rob individuals of their subjective sense of freedom. Thus the real emphasis in his theory is not on the economic efficacy of any regulatory measure, for that could be a matter for empirical economics to decide, but on the conceptual nature of the structures that act in a regulatory manner.

To claim that the regulation of the economy must happen through a moment of concrete universality means that the institutions that intervene in the economy must do so in a way that represents the will of the individuals affected by the decisions, in contrast to the theories of enlightened despotism that were prevalent at Hegel's time. Further, it must represent what is rational in this will, i.e. that aspect of the particular will of the individual that is fit to coexist in a comprehensive political entirety. Certainly, there are important differences between how the public authorities and the corporations help to address the structural problems that emerge in the system of needs. The corporations allow for a more direct sense of identity between the worker and the structure that gives the industry a stable and ethically suitable form. But these corporations are not in themselves sufficient to deal with the complexities of modern economic interdependence, and so they depend on a state authority. But it is crucial to acknowledge that even this state authority is not in a final sense 'external' to the concrete self-interests of the individual. For Hegel, all of the actions of government must be based in a moment of representation, and

Hegel's theory of representation does more than perhaps any other modern theory of political representation to reveal the link between citizens' political identities and their economic identities as a particular kind of economic producer and consumer. But the logic of representation points towards the third and final syllogism that we must consider.

3) POLITICAL REPRESENTATION: POLITICAL IDENTITY THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY (U-S-P)

This final syllogism dictates that the universal authority of the state only arrives at correct decisions in regards to the particular interests of citizens when the will of citizens acts as the factor of mediation. Thus, in my view this syllogism corresponds to the issue of political representation in Hegel's theory of the state, and it explains a structure that must assumed to be in place in Hegel's account of the public authority and the corporations. Yet the issue of political representation is a controversial one in Hegel's philosophy, for he does a great deal in his texts to distance himself from liberal theories of democratic representation. Hegel criticizes two popular models of democracy: one in which popular election decides legislative representatives, and one in which popular election decides the law itself. Instead he supports a model in which representation takes place through membership in an 'estate' and he suggests that the corporations, discussed in the previous section, provide a better means of mediating between the individual and the state's legislative process.

In confronting this issue, my view is that the syllogism provides a crucial structure for grasping Hegel's theory of representation: the middle term of a syllogism must always be considered as 'concrete,' and so Hegel's theory of representation must be considered as an attempt on the part of Hegel to think through the notion of 'concrete singularity' in a politically meaningful way. Thus Hegel's problem with general elections as a mechanism for creating representation is not that they give too much power to the individual in relation to the state, but that they render the individual incapable of mediating its concrete interests with the broader social and political realities of the state, and so give way to manipulation and political indifference of the individual. What I will demonstrate by discussing his theory of representation in terms of this syllogism is that Hegel's critique of liberal theories of representation does not stem from an elitist belief that political power should remain in the hands of state technicians, but rather leads to a conception of representation that gives more power to the less privileged working class, which Hegel sees increasingly politically marginalized in modern society. Thus it

will also become clear that the syllogism of representation does a great deal to mitigate the problems of poverty and alienation that arose in the previous two syllogisms.

As my discussion of the first syllogism argued, in Hegel's view the individual relates to the state on a most basic level through the medium of economic formation. Through civil society one ceases to be simply a person or a subject, and becomes a certain kind of producer and consumer with determinate interests. The great flaw in most theories of democratic representation for Hegel is that they do not consider this concrete individual, but instead take the model of 'person' or 'moral subject.' The difference between abstract individuality and concrete individuality can be explained in terms of the difference between a natural or moral subject and a subject that has passed through the dialectic of civil society. Thus this syllogism that describes the nature of representation can only function if we assume the formation of the individual through the process of labor, as explicated in the case of the first syllogism.

For Hegel the purpose of political representation is one of subjective integration of members of the state with the sovereign action of the state. Hegel does not think that public opinion or the will of the people is the best means for making informed decisions; he makes clear that he puts more faith in well informed and unbiased bureaucrats to make correct decisions.³⁶ Nevertheless, Hegel sees mechanisms of political representation as vital in that they integrate the will of individuals with the reigning public interest of the government, and they also insure against corruption and misuse of governmental authority. He writes: "The element of the estates (in the legislative bodies) has the determination, that the universal interest is not just in-itself, but for itself, that the moment of subjective, formal freedom, the public consciousness come to exist as empirical universality, of the views and thoughts of the many."³⁷ In Chapter Three I argued that the significant advantage of the modern state for Hegel over the ancient *polis* consists in the fact that it is better able to integrate even the non-social, bourgeois interests of the non-political class into the unity of the state. But for Hegel this points towards a particular challenge of structures of political representation in the modern state: How can a section of society whose interests are defined in terms of their private interests nevertheless have their voice included into the substantial actions of the state? How can this class be integrated into the political process without destroying the political process itself? For Hegel, this conceptual challenge precludes the possibility of direct democracy or popular elections, but it posits the need for a more organic conception of how the members of civil society gain a voice in the state.

Instead of direct democracy, Hegel argues for a differentiated form of representation: the agricultural class is represented through a landed aristocracy, while the commercial class is represented through legislators who are elected by the specific corporations (Hegel suggests democratic structures within corporations). In Hegel's section on the legislative power from the *Philosophy of Right*, he gives a firm critique of the models of election practices that emerge out of enlightenment theory and practice. Hegel's specific critique of such democracy is that it 'atomizes' the individual citizens and hence separates their political voice from their social position.³⁸ In the course of civil society, a person's interest in society becomes filtered through a specific, specialized place that he or she takes up in the division of labor. Whether one is a farmer dependent on the land or a factory worker dependent on wages, a merchant dependent on consumer demand or a bureaucrat who is maintained by the state, this position will effect how one relates to the rest of society and how one defines one's own special interest. I might be able to abstract from my specific position in the medium of thought and think of the general good of society, but then I will be in the position that Hegel describes in his section on 'morality,' where I want the good but am not able to fill in this ideal with a specific content that motivates me to act. The result of such an abstract position, Hegel demonstrates, is that the subject fills in this content with some inclination and pronounces this special inclination as absolutely binding, a stance that Hegel argues culminates in moral evil. Here in discussing representation, Hegel gives an argument for why the representative mechanisms of the state cannot simply dismiss the social formation of the individual through civil society: "The notion of dissolving into a mass of individuals the forms of community that are already present in those circles (the estates in civil society) before they enter into the highest concrete universality thereby holds apart the civic (*bürgerliche*) and political lives and leaves the former suspended in the air."³⁹ The danger of this separation is that it puts individuals in civil society into the same position as the dialectic of morality in the previous chapter: though these individuals might have their voices included in public deliberations, they are not able to deliberate about what they actually are in society, and so their deliberations will fail to motivate them and will fail to give the state an actually concrete relation to the economy. Such a structure of direct representation would destroy the content of the prior two syllogisms: it would make politically ineffective the entire 'formation' of the individual in the first syllogisms, and it would give the state's regulatory actions towards the economy an element of arbitrariness because these regulatory actions would not be conditioned by a political mechanism that takes account of the complex nature of economic interdependence.

Hegel's critique of election-driven democracy proves astute when he highlights the two real dangers he sees in it: instead of elevating the powerless, it leads to a disorganization of the industrial working class,⁴⁰ and it leads to political indifference on the part of most. On the one hand, Hegel criticizes the breakdown of the corporations because it leaves the poorest workers who most depend upon such organizations in a state of disorganization, and hence unable strategically to represent their interests within the political body. On the other hand, Hegel sees that the sheer mass of voters in a popular election will lead voters to the conclusion that their vote does not matter and is not able to effect the issues that most depend to them. Far from leading to a more egalitarian society, direct democracy ends up perpetuating inequalities by making the poorest and most vulnerable members of society unable to organize themselves. Thus for Hegel, in popular elections the very purpose of political representation has been undermined; rather than integrating the subjectivity of the commercial individual into the overall action of the state, such democracy heightens the political indifference of the commercial class and leaves this large mass of society unable to articulate its differentiated concerns within a common forum. Certainly, in its details, Hegel's structure of a legislative process organized around estates is untenable today, if for no other reason than the fact that what Hegel in his time called the commercial estate today makes up more or less the whole of society. Nevertheless, the essential point behind his critique of popular elections remains quite poignant, and it points towards the need for structures within a large democracy that mediate between one's social function and one's political identity as a voter or constituent.

Conclusion

In closing, I will attempt to situate the work done in the final chapter within the broader context of the book and, in so doing, I will highlight what I take to be a fundamental *discontinuity* in this book. This discontinuity is crucial, since it coincides with Hegel's fundamental discovery regarding the nature of modern society as a mechanism.

The first three chapters of the book were concerned with tracing the historical context of Hegel's thesis that modern society is, in important ways, mechanistic. In the philosophy of the German enlightenment, the figure of mechanism is used as a positive metaphor for what the modern state can accomplish: this metaphor emphasizes for these authors the fundamental autonomy and independence of all of those interests that must be coordinated and brought into an ordered whole. It also emphasizes the notion that greater efficiency and hence prosperity can be attained through political management of the economy than through simply sticking to traditional, regional and local practices. But the philosophies of Herder and the early German Romantics are deeply critical of the practices of enlightened despotism, and so they turn this dominant metaphor of mechanism in an opposite direction and make it into a device for criticizing the modern state. As I demonstrate in the first chapter, they argue that such enlightenment practices destroy traditional forms of social and communal unification that give people real autonomy and meaning in their lives, and replace these traditional forms of social unity with a merely artificial, imposed, regulatory structure that robs individuals of their ability to relate to a meaningful cultural and ethical community. They thus use the term mechanism to describe the stifling, artificial and atomizing qualities of modern political practices.

The early Hegel seems to have been influenced by their use of this metaphor, and, as I demonstrate in Chapter Two, he initially adopts this figure in the course of making his own analysis of modern society and religion. Hegel

contrasts two forms of social unity: an organic one, in which the members of society are bound together by a common purpose that transcends their own individual lives; and a mechanistic one, in which the members of society are coordinated together based on their own individual self-interest. The early Hegel demonstrates the complicity between ritualistic, meaningless religious practices, and the modern form of political life, in which the state has assumed a role as a manager of the economy, and he uses machine metaphors to describe both of these features of modern society. At the root of this critique, I argue, is a valorization of the political virtues that Hegel sees as the foundation of ancient Greek political life.

In Chapter Three, I demonstrate a transformation that takes place in Hegel's writings from the year 1802. During this era, Hegel comes to identify mechanism with labor processes, particularly those labor processes that involve a division of labor and the use of increasingly complex tools. In addition, Hegel comes to recognize the inherent superiority of modern society over ancient Greek society, due to the fact that ancient society depended on slavery in order to make possible the political agency of a select class in society. In modern society, by contrast, the material substrate (the laboring class) of society is taken into and made part of the political process, and so society simply comes to be seen as synonymous with a network of labor and exchange. And yet Hegel is deeply aware of the political problems that result from including the commercial class within the political mechanisms of society, and he struggles to find a conceptual model that can reconcile the political agency of the ancient Greek *polis* with the social politics of the modern nation state. I argue in the third chapter that Hegel arrives at such a model by thinking of 'ethicality' as an organism that becomes more organic by making its mechanistic functions a part of its functioning. This marks a fundamental distinction between Hegel's social philosophy and that of the early Romantics discussed in Chapter One: Hegel recognizes the need to affirm the role of certain mechanistic categories within modern political life, specifically the freedom of labor and the regulation of the economy by the state, while arguing that this mechanism must be integrated into a more pervasively organic political body. Hegel does not any longer think of organism and mechanism as two opposed visions of society, but rather as two distinct functional aspects of society that, when brought together, increase the freedom and the unity of society as a whole. It should be noted that the politics that Hegel endorses in these 1802 writings is essentially consistent with that of his later *Philosophy of Right*: namely, he believes that the modern industrial economy 'forms' individuals in an ethical sense for their participation in the modern state, and he maintains that the state must contain the economy through regulation

that averts the crises that would occur in a free market society. But Hegel's conceptual model continues to evolve in his later writings, and the later two chapters trace Hegel's evolving thought about the concept of mechanism and the way in which this concept applies to modern society. The later Hegel does not think of the state as an organism that must posit its mechanistic functions as part of itself, but rather as an absolute mechanism.

This book is not primarily concerned with the difference between mechanism and organism in social philosophy, but rather with the concept of mechanism as a category in its own right. If the mechanistic and the organic were discussed in constant juxtaposition in these first three chapters, it was because in the texts that I was dealing with, the mechanistic is always discussed in contrast to the organic. The logic of these texts is anti-nomical rather than dialectical, since they always develop their notion of mechanism by opposing it to a given concept of organism.

The latter two chapters of the book deal with Hegel's systematic writings, and they enable me to discuss the issue of mechanism in relative isolation. In the development of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, I locate a fundamental conceptual revolution in his thinking about the nature of mechanism: Hegel no longer defines the mechanism in opposition to the organic or to internal teleology; rather he considers the mechanistic as a form of objectivity that evolves in its own right out of the very nature of conceptual thought. Unlike the works of Kant, the early German Romantics and even the early Hegel, the *Science of Logic* does not define mechanism through a kind of anti-nomical comparison to the internal teleology of the organism. Rather, mechanism is a form of organization in which objects embody relations of externality, mutual independence and aggregation, and this form of organization results out of the nature of conceptual thought. I demonstrate how, in Hegel's account, the initial conception of mechanism develops into a form of objectivity that Hegel calls 'absolute mechanism' and I argue that according to Hegel absolute mechanism represents a 'rational whole,' a system of objects that is able to sustain itself through its own conceptual self-determination. As a result of this way of thinking about mechanism, it is no longer necessary constantly to juxtapose mechanism to organism or internal teleology. Freedom of a quite distinct sort is possible within mechanistic objectivity, and the final chapter of the book studies this form of freedom as it shapes Hegel's account of the state in his *Philosophy of Right*.

Nevertheless, it is also true that the concept of mechanism returns later in the *Logic* during Hegel's discussion of teleology. As I demonstrate at the end of the fourth chapter, Hegel argues that teleology is only able to realize itself, to pass from external teleology to internal teleology, by integrating and

making use of the mechanistic properties of the objective world. This is most evident in Hegel's conception of labor as an activity whereby humans not only fulfill their subjective goals by acting on the world, but also cultivate an objective understanding of the world that enables them to create new, rationalized forms of production. In this analysis, mechanism is considered as a middle term between the subjective, goal-oriented activity in which we are never fully in possession of our desires and a form of activity in which humans are able to consistently satisfy their goals through a rational structure of social cooperation. By the same token, absolute mechanism considers the state as an interlocking set of institutions in which we are able to mediate between the needs that modern society gives us and a form of activity in which we are able to meet these needs. In this account, this set of institutions is no longer to be considered as an organism. The figure of organism implies that the state has some life that transcends the lives of the parts, in which they find their fulfillment. Here the state is thought instead as a thoroughly mechanistic middle term between the individual will and the ethical whole. The advantage in taking the state in this latter sense seems to be that we avoid the interpretation of Hegel that takes the sovereignty of the state as a kind of end-in-itself, to which the individual's freedom and happiness is irreducibly subordinate. If the concept of organism or internal teleology bears any relevance to Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit, then it is only to the entirety, in which the will manages to realize its own freedom by passing from a state of naked, unsatisfied rationality to an objective world in which the will relates to itself in its relation to its needs. The state is to be considered as a key point in this entirety, the supreme institution of mediation, but not as the entirety of will's objective freedom. And as this supreme point of mediation, it is not unworthy of the state to consider it as a mechanism, since Hegel argues that a teleological process is only complete in and through the way it relates to the development inherent in mechanism.

Notes

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. SW VI, 409–410.
2. This communitarian reading of Hegel and his contemporaries is developed by Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) as well as Fredrick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).
3. SW VII, 12.
4. For an example of such a disavowal, c.f. the preface to Allen Wood, *Hegel's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
5. SW VI, 424–425.
6. Hegel's doctoral thesis in Jena, *Dissertatio philosophica de orbitis planetarum* (1800), involves an attempt to resolve the problems of orbital physics through an explanation of planetary relations in terms of syllogisms. Though Hegel had not yet devised his conception of speculative logic by this point in his career, the text clearly represents a pre-stage to his later logical treatment of absolute mechanism.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. A.L. Schlötzer, *Allgemeines Staatsrecht und Staatsverfassungslehre* (Berlin, 1841), and Christian Wolff, *Vernünfftige Gedanken von dem gesellschaftlichen Leben des Menschen* (Berlin, 1734). C.f. also Beiser's comparison of these theorists' mechanistic theory of society to the Romantics organic conception in Fredrick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution and Romanticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 236–238.
2. The point could be made in a broader philosophical context that early 18th century philosophy lacks any distinct concept of the organic. Even philosophers who would not normally be considered mechanists, such as Rousseau and Leibniz, demonstrate the tendency to break down organic phenomena

- into mechanical ones. Rousseau argues that a living being is simply an infinitely complex machine. C.f. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality* (London: Penguin, 1993), 87. Leibniz makes a similar argument in claiming that the only difference between a machine and a living being is that the living being is too complex in organization to be made by a human, and hence should be considered as a machine with a divine creator. C.f. *Monadology* #64 in G.W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Texts*, ed. Richard Franks and R.S. Woolhouse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).
3. C.f. Beiser, *Revolution*, 205–206. Beiser presents a reading of Herder which asserts that Herder's organicism serves a different political program from the historicism of Edmund Burke and the later German historical school of law. He argues that Herder's defense of tradition stands at the service of Republican ideals and a critique of European dominance over other cultures.
 4. Herder devoted early theoretical attention to the issue of redefining the notion of organism in a biological context in his essay *Vom Empfinden und Erkennen der menschlichen Seele* in: J.G. Herder, *Herders biologische Schriften*, ed. Gerhard Schmidt (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1967).
 5. The section will henceforth be dealing primarily with Herder's 1784–1787 text *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (c.f. abbreviations page).
 6. C.f. *Ideen*, 239.
 7. "Genetic power is the mother of all education (*Bildung*) on earth, to which the climate merely has a friendly or hostile effect. . . . The practical intellect of the human race has under all occasions grown forth under determinate needs and living conditions; but at all times man is a blossom of the inner spirit of a people (*des Genius des Volkes*).” *Ideen*, 224.
 8. C.f. *Ideen*, 227.
 9. In *Ideen*, Book IV, vi., ('Human beings are made for Humanity and Religion') Herder attempts to deduce the notion of humanity and the tendency of humans towards religiosity and love out of his hitherto theory of natural 'drives.'
 10. C.f. *Ideen*, 120–121.
 11. "The mind, whether it is perceiving, or thinking, or judging, or building conceptual images, is always one single vital power, one active unity amongst the diversity of its operations . . . and as such, no less than the whole sentient being of man; indeed it is man." J.G. Herder, *Herders biologische Schriften*, ed. Gerhard Schmidt (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1967), 19.
 12. *Ideen*, 224.
 13. *Ideen*, 224.
 14. *Ideen*, 240.
 15. *Ideen*, 224.
 16. Herder was born and spent the first half of his life in the eastern Baltic region, a linguistically and culturally diverse area that was held together by Prussian

rule. He often favored the rights of distinct Slavic cultures, such as the Livonians, over the rule of the 'enlightened despotism' of the Prussian monarch.

17. Cf. *Ideen*, 244–245.
18. Beiser claims that the Herder of the *Ideen* tends towards anarchism in his critique of the state, a doctrine that Beiser summarizes as the belief that in a fully realized state of humanity the state would disappear. In my view, this interpretation is the result of Beiser attempting to project the views of other philosophers that he treated elsewhere in the book on to Herder for the sake of coherence. My claim is that Herder is a critic of the state who is attempting to counter a certain paternalistic conception of the function of the state. But to claim that the state cannot bring happiness to its citizens in a positive sense, and that any attempt to do so will lead to disaster, is not to claim that the state does not have a more modest negative function of insuring that individuals and cultures have the sovereignty to pursue their own happiness.
19. Fredrick Barnard argues for a similar distinction between the Romantics and Herder, claiming that the difference between Herder's politics and that of the Romantics is that Herder uses his organic model of society to justify an egalitarian conception of society, while the Romantics use such arguments to justify social stratification and eventually in order to defend the rights of the political status quo. His arguments apply perhaps more fully to late Romantics, such as Adam Müller, but his point will be evident in looking at Novalis' politics in this chapter. F.M. Barnard, *Herder's Social and Political Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 156.
20. KSA XII, 51–53.
21. C.f. Schlegel's earlier text, *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus*, where he discusses the three Kantian principles of a republic, freedom, equality and dependence (KSA VII, 11–12).
22. KSA XII, 50.
23. KSA XII, 52.
24. KSA XII, 52.
25. KSA XII, 50.
26. KSA XII, 52–53.
27. When Schlegel speaks of transcendental ideas throughout his philosophy, there are interesting similarities and differences to the Kantian notion of transcendental idea: on the one hand, these ideas are taken as regulative ideas of experience, as ethical demands that cannot be substantiated in external experience. But on the other hand, these ideas are clearly not derived from the faculty of reason for Schlegel as they are for Kant, but accessible on the level of feeling or intuition.
28. In these texts, Schlegel presents a model of the republic that is mostly oriented around his idealistic vision of the Athenian city state and he uses this ideal to critique Kant's liberal model of the republic. While most modern theories of the republic describe the unity of the republic as resting democratically

- created common laws, the ancient republics possessed the superior unifying factor of common morals.
29. Such an account of Schlegel's politics is presented in Beiser, *Revolution*, 245–264.
 30. In his *Lectures on Transcendental Philosophy* (1800–1801) Schlegel retains his commitment to his ideal of republicanism and his definition remains consistent with that presented in his 1796 essay.
 31. For passages where Schlegel considers republic as an 'idea' c.f. *Versuch* (KSA VII, 15–16), and *Vorlesungen* (KSA XII, 56).
 32. "If the form of government is despotic but the spirit is representative or republican, then monarchy arises. . . . (The monarch) can govern in a republican manner and still maintain the despotic form of the state, that is, if the degree of political culture or the political condition of the state makes a provisional government necessary. The criterion of monarchy is the greatest possible promotion of republicanism." KSA VII, 20.
 33. "But one should distinguish (representation) from what is usually meant; namely one calls representatives those who can be regarded merely as deputies, who do not present the whole but are merely subordinate to it. That power can be called representative that presents the whole itself and is positive; for the whole in relation to its parts is positive." KSA XII, 89.
 34. In the censored second part to *Glauben und Liebe*, Novalis shows his cards and speaks of the "relativity of positive forms" of political authority and the need to see each form of political authority as a possibility to promote political progress.
 35. C.f. *Glauben und Liebe*, no. 17.
 36. "There will come a time, and soon, when we will be universally convinced no king can exist without republic and no republic without a king, that the one could not survive without the other, like body and soul" (*Glauben und Liebe*, no. 16).
 37. *Glauben und Liebe*, no. 9.
 38. *Das allgemeine Brouillon*, no. 782.
 39. *Blütenstaub*, no. 74.
 40. *Glauben und Liebe*, no. 2.
 41. *Glauben und Liebe*, no. 3.
 42. *Das allgemeine Brouillon*, no. 433.
 43. C.f. Adam Müller, *Elemente der Staatskunst* (Berlin, 1809), especially vol. II, p. 99 and vol. III p. 327.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. GW I, 234–235. C.f. abbreviations page. I am ignoring at present the controversy over whether the *System Program* is actually authored by Hegel, though I will take this up later in the chapter.

2. Such an interpretation of Hegel is implicit in Charles Taylor's reading of the early Hegel, since he portrays the early Hegel as a communitarian thinker concerned with articulating a unifying cultural core for Germans. C.f. Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 70. In a new book on Hegel, Beiser also likens the mature Hegel's model of the organic state to the Romantic conception of the social organism (c.f. Beiser, *Hegel*, 239–243). The Romantic position, to which I am here contrasting the early Hegel, could be summarized as the position that the true basis for social unity and political sovereignty must consist in culturally inherited factors, such as language, art traditions and cultural practices, while legislation and political regulation of the economy merely act to destroy this 'organic' unity. For a summary of the Romantic position regarding what makes society organic, c.f. Beiser, *Revolution*, 236–238.
3. It has been widely debated in the secondary literature how much Hegel's model of political virtue in this era is dependent on an idealized vision of the Greek polis, or on Kant's ethics, or even as Laurence Dickey argues, on certain communitarian forms of protestant theology that Hegel was exposed to in Schwabia. C.f. Laurence Dickey, *Hegel: Religion, Economics and the Politics of Spirit*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), particularly 143–179. Though I find Dickey's account of the roots of these themes in Pietist theology compelling, an examination of the texts in question will show that Hegel could not articulate his conception of political virtue without relying heavily on Greek thought.
4. GW I, Text 16.
5. GW I, 108.
6. Throughout Hegel's philosophical career he will continue to describe repetitive habits as 'mechanical,' whether in the sense of religious practices or of repetitive study techniques for learning. "Like the material mechanism, the spiritual mechanism consists in the fact that those things that spirit relates remain external to one another. A mechanical manner of representation, a mechanical memory, habit, a mechanical form of action mean that the peculiar penetration and presence of spirit is lacking." SW VI, 410.
7. GW I, 109.
8. GW I, 88.
9. In the context of a discussion in which Hegel mocks all those who would write a list of commandments or a moral code Hegel writes: "this negative action of Campe's Theophron—that man should act for himself, resolve himself, not let others act for him—man is here nothing but a mere machine." GW I, 94.
10. In this sense, even though Hegel is treating the subject of religion here, this definition of mechanism could just as well apply to the issue of industrial labor. Laurence Dickey, who is generally so much concerned with returning Hegel's writings from this era to the context of protestant theology, even

admits that the theme of religious habit from this era is clearly informed by Hegel's occupation with readings of modern economists and their conception of self interest and the division of labor. (C.f. Dickey, *Hegel*, 181, where he writes that Hegel in the Tübingen essay "already understood how economics qua the force of habit, interest and material circumstance conditioned the ethical choices men made about the conduct of their lives in concrete historical situations.")

11. GW I, 112.
12. Ludwig Siep, *Hegels praktische Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 151. Ludwig Siep has an excellent essay discussing the evolution of the concept of freedom in Hegel's early writings. Siep argues that in this period, Hegel defines freedom as '*Vereinigung*,' i.e. the unification of an individual with a social body that can sustain itself in an autonomous way.
13. Hegel puts the words in the mouth of Jesus against the Jews: "... your spiritless science and your mechanical customs." GW I, 224. In a further machine metaphor against the positivity of the Jewish religion Hegel writes: "This state of the Jewish religion had to awaken in men of a better mind and heart who couldn't give up their feeling of themselves and debase themselves into dead machines the need for a free activity . . ." GW I, 283.
14. GW I, 201.
15. In Hegel's own terminology from this period what is at stake here is Christianity's transformation from a 'private religion' to a 'public religion' (*Völk-sreligion*), its incapacity to function as the latter. "Falsely what could only be valid for a small family was carried over to the whole of civil society." GW I, 129.
16. GW I, text 34.
17. GW I, 369–370.
18. In a slightly earlier passage Hegel writes of this idealized ancient *polis*: "in public as well as private each lived as a free human being, each followed his own law. The idea of the father land, of the state was the invisible, the higher for which he worked, that drove him, this was the final goal (*Endzweck*) of the world, or the final goal of his world . . . before this idea his individuality disappeared, he demanded only the maintenance of his earthly life, and he got this; to ask for the eternal maintenance of this individual life, or to beg for it, could not occur to him." GW I, 368.
19. The fragments were put together by Rosenkranz and it is probable that they were not intended by Hegel to belong together in a collection.
20. GW I, 446.
21. To me the most credible thesis seems to be that the work is a product of co-authorship between Hegel and Hölderlin, less likely Schelling, since the scholarship has managed to demonstrate that individual passages of the text are inconsistent with positions of each of the three potential authors. In addition, the general level of complexity and emotive tone of the text is

quite different than any of the writings produced by these three authors during this period. This change in tone and level of complexity could be explained if the text is taken as a product of a discussion between two or three, rather than a deliberate work.

22. GW I, 234.
23. GW I, 234.
24. GW I, 234–235.
25. “And also the intention of the author ‘to unmask the entire miserable human construction of state, constitution, government and legislation’ stands—despite the typical for this period mention of the ‘state machine’—so much in contradiction to all the testaments of Hegel’s thought on the state, especially his interest in the developments in France, that reflect themselves in the constitutions, that Hegel departs from the circle of possible authors (of the *System Program*).” Walter Jaeschke, *Hegel Handbuch* (Frankfurt am Main: Metzler, 2003), 79.
26. Some scholarship dates this text to 1802 in Hegel’s Jena period, rather than 1800. It seems likely that he wrote large parts of it in Frankfurt and then took it up a few years later with the goal of publishing it. In terms of the content of the piece, the level of critical insight into the French revolution and the defense of guilds points towards Hegel’s Jena thought. But I have included it in this section because it still uses the figure of mechanism in a largely metaphorical way and the continuity is clear between this and the previously discussed pieces.
27. GW I, 481.
28. GW I, 481.
29. His critique of this aspect of the state is also evident in his critique of Fichte’s conception of the state in his *Foundation of Natural Right* a few years later. The latter Hegel as well gives these professional organizations a vital role in his social and political philosophy: on the one hand they save the individual from the volatility of free market capitalism, on the other hand they give the individual a proper political voice. The later Hegel is against most conceptions of representative democracy to the degree that they construe the relation of the individual to the state merely as a voter, for Hegel sees this as an ‘atomization’ of society. Hegel believes that the concrete interests of the individual can only be represented to the degree that the individual belongs to a professional group or ‘*Stand*’ (a social class) that has a political voice in the state. In his later philosophy as well, Hegel sees such organizations as an organic development out of the economy, not as a political creation (for he treats them within the dialectic of civil society), and he frames their importance in terms of a metaphor similar to mechanism vs. organism: they prevent the atomization of society, the unmediated relation between abstract individual and state authority. The passage just cited gives us grounds for tracing the early genesis of this thought: the state is centralizing

and mechanistic (even when it is democratic) to the degree that it breaks down the properly 'organic' structures through which individuals relate to the universal aspect of their activity.

30. Aveneri sees in Hegel's critique of French and Prussian micro-management an extension of Hegel's overall critique of the German empire: "Yet this critique is aimed not only at the centralism of republican France; in a way, republican centralism is nothing other to Hegel than the old paternalistic state writ large and universalized. Frederician Prussia and republican France ultimately stand for the same principle; by invoking the idea of unlimited sovereignty they end up with the state as a 'machine with a single spring.'" Shlomo Aveneri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 48. What Aveneri seems to realize here is Hegel's insight that when the state encroaches on the functions of civil society, it loses the kind of political agency that really makes it sovereign, and hence it suffers from the same shortfall as a political body that lacks sovereign agency, albeit because of the over-extension of this agency.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Hegel did not yet use the term civil society (*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*) until the 1817 *Encyclopedia*. However, since these texts are largely occupied with the issue of economic activities and the sphere of social involvements, rights and institutions entailed by them, I have chosen to use this term here for the sake of expediency, since it makes clear the contrast between social/economic aspects and political aspects that Hegel is working with in these texts.
2. '*System der Sittlichkeit*' is known in English as 'System of Ethical Life,' but I have chosen to translate '*Sittlichkeit*' as 'Ethicality' because there is no notion of 'life' in the German term *Sittlichkeit*, and this specification seems crucial to my work since I will be focusing largely on the notion of the mechanistic and organic in this work.
3. When Hegel here explains that the 'un-free' or laboring class dwells in the separated 'extremes' of the concept, I believe this can be explained by reference to his treatment of labor in the *System of Ethicality*, where labor involves the separation of 'need-work' and 'work-enjoyment.' The same aspect that makes work mechanical also makes this class of workers into a class of the 'un-free.'
4. Ludwig Siep has written an excellent essay distinguishing the evolving conceptions of freedom in Hegel's early thought; he considers the stance of '*Freigabe des Einzelnen*' (giving-up ones individuality) as definitive of Hegel's notion of freedom in the Natural Right essay (C.f. Siep, *Hegels praktische Philosophie*, 161). I will argue, however, that the text must be understood as an attempt to diagnose the limits of this notion of freedom and describe

its relation to a different, negative model of freedom embodied in modern political institutions.

5. In his reading of the *Natural Right* essay, Dickey gives a rather strong role to the notion of *Tapferkeit* within Hegel's thought of this time, and he views Hegel's goal in the text as one of reinventing such a virtue within the modern context as a solution to the ethical problems of the modern economy (C.f. Dickey, *Hegel*, 220–227). In my view, this account of the role of *Tapferkeit* within the text fails to account for two serious issues: 1) the issue that I will explicate henceforth as the 'tragedy within the ethical'; i.e. that the free class within the Greek *polis* must sacrifice itself in order to make bourgeois freedom possible; 2) where Hegel critiques or seeks to limit bourgeois self-interest in this essay he does so not from a description of political virtues, but from one of state regulation. In my view, the *Natural Right* essay marks a phase in Hegel's development where he acknowledges that the form of ethicality, or social cohesion, that is founded in the virtues of the ruling class is an untenable, or not fully organic form of integration. Instead, he seeks to found the cohesion of the whole on a form of ethicality in which each of the parts is bound to the whole out of self-interest. Such a whole is however only approachable through a description of institutional rationality, not through the description of the subjective dispositions of the members of the state.
6. GW IV, 456. If we take this passage on the tragedy within the ethical as it stands, without looking at the further development of modern ethical life out of this tragedy, Hegel's insight here bears a remarkable similarity to Arendt's thesis regarding 'the rise of the social. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 38–50. Like Arendt, Hegel argues that the price for the political freedom of the laboring class is the loss of the kind of political autonomy that he sees embodied in the virtues of the ancient Greek aristocrats. But unlike Arendt, Hegel seeks to reinvent a particular kind of political autonomy that is reconcilable with, but not identifiable with, 'the rise of the social.'
7. GW IV, 462.
8. GW IV, 461.
9. GW IV, 461.
10. According to Hegel's later *Philosophy of History* the difference between modern and ancient society consists in the fact that in ancient society only some were free, while in modern society all are free. The present passage in *Natural Right* clearly serves as a kind of foundation for this position. It demonstrates, however, that this transition from some being free to all being free requires Hegel to mediate between two very distinct concepts of freedom: freedom as political virtue vs. freedom as individual right. What seems crucial in the present discussion is the notion that this modern freedom is only seen as valuable insofar as it can actually be viewed as a factor that leads to more cohesive integration within society.

11. In a rather parenthetical context, Ludwig Siep gives an excellent articulation of this sense in which Hegel uses the term organism within the *Natural Right* essay: "*Paradoxerweise enthaelt gerade der Begriff des Organischen—der immer wieder als romantisch und totalitaer kritisiert wurde—die 'liberalen' Zuege der hegelschen Staatsphilosophie.*" Siep, *Hegels praktische Philosophie*, 168. In the footnote Siep expands upon the meaning of the organic within Hegel's political thought: "*Im Begriff des Organischen hat Hegel nicht nur die Einheit, sondern stets auch die Selbststaendikeit der Teile und das Vermoeegen, das Ganze gerade in ihrer beonderen Funktion zu repraesentieren, zu denken versucht.*" Needless to say, this conception of the organic is completely consonant with the notion that I am developing here. Since however, my work is primarily interested in a definition of the mechanistic, rather than the organic, the point remains to be made that the organic must be thought of as containing or integrating the mechanistic forms of social existence within it.
12. GW IV, 450.
13. GW IV, 456.
14. GW IV, 451.
15. Hegel admits that there are two ways in which the state limits civil society (GW IV, 451): advertent and inadvertent. An example of an inadvertent limitation would be the fighting of a war, which conscripts members of the working class and absorbs taxes. An example of an advertent limitation would be taxation of the wealthy intended to improve the lives of the poor. Hegel's point is that any action of the state that limits the development of bourgeois interests is one that serves to give measure to the inherent measureless-ness of the civil society, which tends towards ever greater social disparity.
16. These two potencies of labor bear a close relation to Arendt's distinction between labor and work in *The Human Condition*, the first potency corresponding to what Arendt calls labor, the second to work. The obvious difference, of course, is that Hegel considers the first potency as a kind of abstraction, since all human labor tends in the direction of some repeatable labor process that transcends the actual consumption of the worked on object.
17. GW V, 285.
18. GW V, 290.
19. It would be easy to compare the two conceptions of labor here to the analysis of labor in the master-slave dialectic of Hegel's *Phenomenology* (1807). The first form of work from *Ethicality* is taken up there in the analysis of the master, who merely negates the object as something immediate, while the second form of work is taken up there in the case of the slave, who subordinates his desire to negate the object in working upon it. The *Phenomenology* makes clear moreover that the formation of spirit, its acquiring of a conception of its own freedom and of its right, is based in the work of the slave.

This seems parallel to the manner in which Hegel here develops the notion of 'right' out of the second conception of labor.

20. GW V, 303.
21. GW V, 302.
22. GW V, 305.
23. GW V, 350–357.
24. GW IV, 461.
25. Hegel's term 'potency' is derivative of Schelling's nature philosophy, which uses this term to designate a developmental phase within the genesis of a systematic whole, a fragment in which the whole is visible at some phase of its organization. Hegel seems to use the term here in a somewhat different manner to designate each of the subsystems that make up a social whole, such as the family, the economy and political institutions.
26. "The historical recognition of laws demonstrates . . . that there is now lacking in the living present an understanding (of the laws) and the meaning is lacking, even if through the form of law, and by way of the fact that the laws still represent the interests of some factions and these factions have attached their existence to these laws, these (laws) still have force and power." GW IV, 481.
27. GW IV, 482–483.
28. GW V, 349–357.
29. "This necessary inequality that establishes itself inside the commercial class and within all of the specialized branches of commerce brings forth a relation of dominance (*Herrschaftsverhaeltnis*) by way of its quantitative make-up, which only relates to degrees and is not capable of any other determination than that of degree; the individual, immensely wealthy one becomes a power, he sublates the form of pervasive physical dependence, to be of a particular and not a universal nature." GW V, 353–354.
30. GW V, 354.
31. GW IV, 462.
32. "The foremost character of the commercial class, that it is capable of an organic, absolute intuition, and of respect for an albeit foreign divinity, falls away; and the bestiality of disdain for everything higher emerges; the wisdom-less, the purely universal, the mass of wealth is determinative; and the absolute bond of the people, the ethical has disappeared, and the people dissolved." GW V, 354.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Hegel famously writes in the preface to the *Philosophy of Right* that this work assumes a familiarity with his *Science of Logic* (C.f. SW VII, 12). However, the nature of this dependency is not clarified and is often denied or neglected in contemporary readings of Hegel's political philosophy.

2. Thus in this sense, I take this developmental claim to be a further argument for the point I will make in the second section of paper about the logical status of mechanism. By demonstrating that the concept of mechanism is tied up integrally with Hegel's mature notion of what logic is, it becomes impossible to doubt the logical status of this moment without raising larger questions about Hegel's general logical methodology, a step which critics such as Rosencranz and Düsing don't take themselves to be making.
3. Hegel's 'Fragments from Lecture Manuscripts' (1801–1802), which he prepared during his first academic year as a teacher, already demonstrate the three part structure that readers of Hegel's *Encyclopedia* will recognize: first 'Logic and Metaphysics,' then philosophy of nature, philosophy of spirit, and finally a fourth part that Hegel devotes to art, religion and philosophy. This last part corresponds to what Hegel later adopts into his philosophy of spirit under the term 'absolute spirit.'
4. SW V, 16.
5. C.f. Hegel's Letter to Niethammer from 5.20.1808. Johannes Hoffmeister, *Briefe von und an Hegel* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952), Vol. I, 226–233.
6. This account of the role of logic and metaphysics in the academic canon is indebted largely to Jaeschke's account (Jaeschke, *Hegel Handbuch*, 165).
7. GW V, 273.
8. GW V, 272.
9. GW V, 272.
10. GW V, 274.
11. SW VI, 373.
12. This gives grounds for the highly tenuous suspicion that the early problematic of passing from logic over to metaphysics (hence from propaedeutic to construction) corresponds to a problem that Hegel later manages to take up within the logic itself: that of passing from the subjective side of the concept to the objective concept (i.e. from syllogism to mechanism).
13. Hegel had already undertaken an interpretation of the solar system as a 'syllogistic' rational entirety in his *Habilitationsschrift* in August of 1801. It would be credible to guess that this project gave Hegel the notion of investigating the "speculative meaning of the syllogism" in the lecture manuscript from the Fall of 1801, though the distinctions within his philosophical categories at this time did not enable him to carry out a systematic incorporation of this insight until, as I will later claim, the section on absolute mechanism in the *Science of Logic*. C.f. Chapter 5 (cross reference).
14. GW VII, 127.
15. GW VII, 127.
16. GW VII, 127.
17. Jaeschke, *Hegel Handbuch*, 108. From here Jaeschke undertakes a reconstruction of the incorporation of the moments treated under metaphysics

into other disciplines, i.e. into the philosophy of spirit as well as various parts of the *Science of Logic*.

18. SW VII, 84.
19. SW V, 52.
20. C.f. Friedhelm Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler, eds., *Hegel-Studien*, Band 2 (Bonn: Bouvier, 1963), 12–47.
21. C.f. Letter from Hegel to Niethammer, 5–20–1808. Hoffmeister, *Briefe*, Vol. I, 226.
22. In the *Science of Logic* the progression runs: (Syllogism), Objectivity: Mechanism, Chemism, Teleology; Idea: Life, Cognition, Absolute Idea. The most marked contrasts between the present fragment and the final version are: the lack of ‘external teleology’ as a transitional moment between objectivity and life; and more significantly, the complete lack of sub-moments within each of these moments in the fragment. Where the final logic distinguishes several different kinds of mechanism and chemism, this fragment groups them each under a single rubric.
23. Long before Hegel’s first formulation of mechanism as a logical category in the 1808 fragment, Hegel was extensively occupied with the theoretical problems involved in orbital mechanics. His most ambitious approach to this issue before taking it into his logic is contained in his Jena dissertation ‘*De orbitis planetarum*’ from 1801. The thrust of his thesis here is to call into question the Newtonian mathematical theory of gravitational mechanics and suggest instead a ‘syllogistic’ mode of explication. Obviously, the text represents an important *Vorstufe* to Hegel’s logic of mechanism, though he was far from having the logical methodology that would allow him to see it as such.
24. HS II, 12. In comparison to Hegel’s later conception of the mechanistic object, we have the same contradiction between equality and indifference that Hegel dwells on in *Science of Logic*, and yet here the contradiction is expressed in terms of the lack of mediation between singularity and universality.
25. HS II, 13.
26. HS II, 13.
27. HS II, 14.
28. HS II, 14.
29. HS II, 65.
30. Pöggeler writes: “*Vielmehr ist die Darstellung jetzt bestimmt von dem Versuch, die moderne wissenschaftliche Einstellung dadurch in die Metaphysik (“Logik”) hineinzunehmen, dass die Leitfaeden der wissenschaftlichen Weltdeutung—Mechanismus, Chemismus, Teleologie—als Momente der Metaphysik oder Logik entwickelt werden.*” HS II, 67
31. This critique, which is advanced by Claus Düsing and Otto Pöggeler among others, will be examined in the coming section in some detail.

32. C.f. Vittorio Hösle, *Hegels System: Der Idealismus der Subjektivität und das Problem der Intersubjektivität*, Band I (Hamburg: Bouvier, 1987), 240.
33. What I describe here is a critique already present during and just after Hegel's own lifetime by critics as well as proponents of Hegel's philosophy such as Bachmann (1828), Sigwart (1831) and Rosenkranz (1834), which is today presented by Hösle (c.f. '*Objektivität und Idee des Lebens*' in Hösle, *Hegels System*, 184). Düsing also presents a similar critique of the notion of objectivity in Hegel's logic in Klaus Düsing, *Das Problem der Subjektivität in Hegels Logik*, Hegel Studien (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1995), although Düsing disputes not so much the logical origin of the specific moments of mechanism, chemism, etc., but instead the general appropriateness of 'objectivity' as a dialectical counter-moment to 'subjectivity' within the doctrine of the concept. According to Düsing, objectivity represents a regression to a logic that was already overcome by this point in the logic.
34. E.g. Hösle argues that what is really at stake in the transition from inference to objectivity is "a kind of logical pre-formation of the 'creation' of the world by God." Hösle, *Hegels System*, 238.
35. "If we merely wanted to judge by the use of language, then we would have to go much further [than adopting mechanism, chemism and life into the logic], since we often *metaphorically* extend natural forms and processes to spirit and spiritual determinations to nature. We speak of the force of attraction of a theater, of a repulsive request, the pressure of relations, the warmth or coldness of feelings. . . . What a wonderful chance to expand the logic!" Karl Rosenkranz, *Epilologemena zu der logischen Idee* (Munich: 1862), 46.
36. SW VI, 410.
37. John Burbidge, "Objektivität," 225–243 in *G.W.F. Hegel Wissenschaft der Logik*, eds. Anton Friedrich Koch and Frederike Schick (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 226.
38. SW VI, 407.
39. SW VI, 408.
40. Heinz Kimmerle, "Der Geist in seinem Anderssein: Objektivität in Hegels Logik und in der Realphilosophie," 181–188 in: *Hegel-Jahrbuch* (1989), 184. Kimmerle generally regards the concept of objectivity in the same light as my present treatment, but takes an opposite stance on this sequence of the two meanings of the term objectivity. He interprets the section on objectivity as progressing from the second meaning given above to the first (thus mechanism as objectivity external to the concept and teleology as objectivity that is the 'in-and-for-itself' of the concept). While his interpretation might seem intuitive, it is clearly countered by Hegel's own words, as cited above. Although the moment of mechanism is characterized by 'externality,' this is not yet the kind of externality wherein the subjectivity stands over and against the object (the second meaning), as in teleology. Thus Hegel

writes of the first moment of mechanism that “the *Urteil* has not yet been posited” (SW VI, 409), i.e. the differentiation of a subjectivity from an objectivity.

41. SW VI, 408.
42. The critics, such as Düsing, who want to argue that ‘objectivity’ stands for a form of externality and immediacy that does not belong in the doctrine of the concept ignore Hegel’s own demand that if thought is to be considered as a thoroughly self-determining then it must realize itself in externality. If objectivity is merely a form of immediacy that is outside of the concept, it is indeed not a part of the concept’s own movement. But the matter is expressed quite clearly in the above definition that objectivity has to be thought of as a form of immediacy *within* the concept; it is the thought of a kind of immediacy that results out of the notion that a disjunctive syllogism is a kind of syllogism that must exist in order to explain its act of mediation. And only because this form of immediacy is inside of the concept is it capable of progressing from one ‘meaning’ to another, as Hegel claims above.
43. SW VI, 408.
44. It is clear that the passage at the start of ‘Objectivity’ (SW VI, 402–404) where Hegel discusses the ontological proof must be considered more as a comparison between two related kinds of arguments than as an endorsement of the ontological proof. Hegel makes clear that the ontological proof rests on a fundamentally important logical notion, i.e. that thought must determine itself in externality in order to be conceived as self-determining, but that the proof warrants critique, since it has been taken to imply a notion of existence that is not at all appropriate to logical argumentation, i.e. existence as given-ness in sense experience.
45. I.e. a syllogism of the form: A is either B or C. A is not B. Hence A is C. Or: A is either B or C (but not both). A is B. Hence A is not C. The upshot of this syllogism for Hegel is the realization of a form of singularity (i.e. A) that negates its own particularity through its universal nature.
46. Burbidge, ‘*Objektivität*,’ 226–227.
47. SW VI, 399.
48. “Conceptual thought is this dynamic moment that is constituted as distinct, but this very constitution mediates and determines the other moments, and thereby the total movement. Yet this dynamic of internal self-mediation is simply immediately present. It is a being, not as pure indeterminacy, but as mediated with its integrating justification or concept. It is the heart of the matter that not only is implicit and hypothetical but independently exists. This is what can be called objectivity—a necessity that is strictly universal because it is not relative to anything else, but is absolutely self-determining.” John Burbidge, *On Hegel’s Logic: Fragments of a Commentary* (Atlantic Highland: Humanities Press, 1981), 189.
49. SW VI, 410.

50. Hegel's titling of the moments within mechanism varies somewhat in the *Encyclopedia* versions of the logic: nevertheless, I believe the sequence of his argument remains essentially parallel. In the 1830 version, §194 (simply 'The Object'; not yet even referred to as mechanism) corresponds to the mechanical object of the *SL*, §195 ('The Mechanism') terminates in the formal mechanistic process; §196 results in what Hegel calls the differentiated mechanism, another term for the 'Real Mechanism' of the *SL*; and the final paragraphs §197, 198, 199 deal with absolute mechanism. For the sake of expediency, I will retain the titles of the *Science of Logic* version in my account, though in some respects the later titles are illuminating. The fact that Hegel would treat the 'mechanical object' under the rubric simply of 'The Object' implies that this initial notion of mechanism which I will be explaining follows straight from the first, preliminary definition of what objectivity is.
51. SW VI, 410.
52. In light of Hegel's rigorous distinction between mechanism and causality or part-whole relations, it represents a serious misunderstanding on the part of Höhle where he tries to salvage the logical content of mechanism by boiling it down to a manner of thinking the relation of parts to a whole. C.f. Höhle, *Hegels System*, 247. After rejecting the logical status of mechanism, Höhle tries to recover some of the logically relevant thoughts dealt with under mechanism by claiming that what is really at stake here is a logical relation of parts to whole. He then chastises Hegel for never thematizing 'relationality' as a logical category. Thus Höhle argues that Hegel is simply repeating a content already dealt with in the doctrine of essence, and such a category would be truly appropriate for dealing with the objective contents in nature and spirit that Hegel wants to deal with here under mechanism. What Höhle ignores here is the fundamental difference between an essential category and a conceptual one, and Hegel's persistent attempt to cleanse his treatment of objectivity from such essential aspects. Further, Hegel has clear methodological grounds for not dealing with relationality in the doctrine of the concept, since the doctrine of the concept seeks to sublimate the negative unity of relations into the self-determining nature of the concept.
53. In Hegel's employment of the term 'aggregation' we might hear a resonance to a passage in which Kant treats the concept of aggregation as opposed to that of system (C.f. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 861). The system is the totality in which the parts determine themselves into the relation that binds them, whereas in the mere aggregation they are indifferent to their relation. Such a comparison makes it clear to what degree Hegel's objective concept of mechanism, which critics would consign to nature, touches at the very heart of the categories of philosophical thought.
54. SW VI, 413.
55. SW VI, 413.

56. Biard's commentary compares this dilemma of determinism to the overall exigency of the doctrine of the concept and find it lacking: "This theoretical attitude of determinism, looking to comprehend the world in terms of an infinite chain of causes and effects, fails in two senses to grasp objectivity in a legitimately conceptual manner. First, because it refers the determination of an object to another object . . . Secondly because in admitting for each object an equal degree of indifference towards the fact of being determined by the other, it radically isolates its own determination from its outwardly directed activity. *With this, it abolishes the specificity of the concept, which is to say, its power of self-determination.*" (Emphasis mine). Joel Biard, D. Buvat, J.F. Kervegan, J.F. Kling, *Introduction à la lecture de la 'Science de la logique,' Volume 3: La doctrine du concept* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), 261.
57. "It is thus departing from this extenuation of the productive concept that a new processuality emerges . . . the contradiction testifies to the activity of the concept." Biard, *Introduction*, 261.
58. *Encyclopedia* (1830), §194.
59. SW VI, 413.
60. SW VI, 412–413. In comparing the following two passages, we see that Hegel at one point describes the object as lacking 'negative unity' and at another, after the development of the mentioned contradiction, introduces such a negative unity to the sphere of objectivity: 1) "In that the object is now the totality of *being-determinate*, but due to its indeterminacy and immediacy not the *negative unity* of this (being determinate), it is hence *indifferent* to its determination as *individuality* . . ." SW VI, 412. And roughly a page and half later, the very last sentence on the mechanistic object: 2) "This contradiction is hereby the *negative unity* of multiple objects repellant to one another." SW VI, 413. Thus the pivotal concept between the mechanistic object and its dissolution into process is that of 'negative unity.'
61. *Encyclopedia* (1830), §195.
62. This logic of communication does not seem adequate as a description of Hegel's overall stance towards laws; it might at best be an articulation of what happens when a people must conform to a legal code that is not culturally and historically appropriate to its phase of development.
63. Such a distribution in which one object embodies the universal and another the singular can only emerge through the medium of particularity. One object can be active and another reactive in so far as it is e.g. bigger, faster, etc. This is to say: there is a common characteristic in terms of which they can be compared. Thus the structure of a formal syllogism has emerged, in which particularity mediates between a universal and a singular.
64. SW VI, 417.
65. SW VI, 418.

66. SW VI, 418.
67. The denial of a teleological relation between the mechanical object and the formal process makes up an important part of Hegel's argument and his development of the retrospective grounding of the object. He writes of the object at the end of the formal process: "its end is not at its beginning, as with the *telos*." SW VI, 418. Although the process results in the same closed singularity as was present in the object, it is not the object that determines the process out of its own concept, but the process which grounds or explains the original nature of the object.
68. Biard, *Introduction*, 269.
69. SW VI, 419.
70. It seems that Hegel already foreshadowed this 'distribution of the anti-thesis' in the previous section, where one object was said to have 'absorbed the full force of the universal,' and other to remain singular. Does not the thought of action and reaction already involve the present distinction, i.e. a differential power relation within the process?
71. SW VI, 421.
72. "Only a self-conscious being has a true fate, because it is *free, in-and-for-itself* in the *singularity* of its 'I' and can stand over and against its objective and can *alienate* itself from this universality. But through this separation it arouses against itself the mechanical relation of fate." SW VI, 421. Of course this passage on fate is to be read as a digression from the logical movement, since it deals not with objectivity as such in its mechanistic aspect but with a certain kind of object, namely self-consciousness, in the way in which it embodies the mechanical process. This passage provides a remarkable example of the degree to which the logical moment at hand, the real process, can be *applied* and *adapted* towards a specific context that would properly belong to objective spirit. Furthermore, this moment of fate does not really correspond to any moment in Hegel's mature philosophy of spirit (at best to certain moments in Hegel's *Phenomenology* or Frankfurt writings), and perhaps provides the basis for a stronger articulation of the relation between epoch making individuals and their epoch's ethical fabric than is given anywhere in Hegel's mature system.
73. In Hegel's earlier fragment *The Spirit of Christianity and its Fate*, fate is the act by which a 'bifurcation in life' heals itself through a recognition of the inescapable unity behind this bifurcation. Fate stands in contrast here to punishment, where the universal is a foreign power that reclaims the alienated individual without being recognized by the individual. With the thematization of resistance and violence, the present treatment of fate thus comes closer to Hegel's earlier conception of punishment than his early conception of fate.
74. Hence the *result* of the real process bears a resemblance to the moment of fate in Hegel's Frankfurt period, although the real process itself does not, for

the reasons listed above. Nevertheless, to the degree that the reconciliation of the result only comes about in and through the moment of violence, it is as if Hegel here posits punishment as leading to self-reconciliation in fate, a possibility that the earlier Hegel clearly rejected in his condemnation of punishment as a form of betterment.

75. SW VI, 287–288.
76. SW VI, 423.
77. SW VI, 423.
78. SW VI, 410–411.
79. SW VI, 424.
80. SW VI, 425.
81. In illustrating this ‘syllogism of syllogisms’ within the text, Hegel uses not the figure of the solar system, but of civil society and the state. The ‘absolute center’ stands for the government (*Regierung*), the ‘relative centers’ for the citizens, and the non-self sufficient objects are the citizens ‘external needs,’ the objects of their physical and economic subsistence. I will return to this ‘syllogism of syllogisms’ and its political explanation in the next chapter. What is important here is the logical movement, particularly insofar as Hegel only mentions the third syllogism in order to subordinate it to the others.
82. This final section of absolute mechanism, law, falls out completely from the latter drafts of the *Encyclopedia*. Rather than gaining new ground I argue that this section simply elucidates a logical contradiction implicit in the absolute mechanism. Namely, it makes clear that the self-determination present in absolute mechanism is founded on a relation of ‘lack.’ Thus rather than provide a new notion of mechanism, this section seems to pave the way for the sublation of mechanism into chemism.
83. SW VI, 427.
84. C.f. Biard, *Introduction*, 276. “The centrality, provided by the model of heliocentrism, thus becomes at the heart of mechanism the logical expression of conceptual subjectivity.”
85. A look at Hegel’s terminology in this section will show that Hegel does not use the terms ‘subjective concept’ or ‘subjectivity’ within the absolute mechanism, while he does use them extensively later within the section on teleology, and indeed in such a manner as if they were reemerging from a sphere in which they were not articulated. Further, what Biard calls the ‘reemergence’ of the conceptual moments singular, particular and universal, or of the syllogistic structures in absolute mechanism, is not to be understood as a transposition from the prior sections where they are treated explicitly. They are objective universality, singularity and particularity, and thus the syllogism arrived at in absolute mechanism is no longer a form of subjective mediation, but an objective one.
86. “(The teleological subject’s) process in this relation is none other than the mechanical or chemical process; in this objective externality, the former

relations re-emerge, but under the dominion of the purpose. But these other processes go, as has been demonstrated in their development, back into the purpose. . . . The negative comportment of purposive activity here is thus not an external activity, but rather the change and transition of objectivity itself within it." SW VI, 452.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Cf. Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1–14.
2. Hegel does refer to the state as a 'self-relating organism' in §§259 of the *Philosophy of Right*, but this reference seems to have no real role in his course of argumentation, as it does the 1802 texts. It is peripheral and unsubstantial in comparison to the fascinating discussion of the state as absolute mechanism that I will be discussing here. It is also crucial to note that this reference to organism in the *Philosophy of Right* refers to the relation of the powers of government to one another, not to the relation between society and the state.
3. Dieter Henrich, 'Logische Form und Reale Totalität' in: Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, eds., *Hegels Philosophie des Rechts. Die Theorie der Rechtsformen und ihre Logik* (Stuttgart: Hellenmeyer Verlag, 1982).
4. Henrich's study of the syllogism of syllogisms highlights the foundational importance of this thought to Hegel's system, but it merely raises the question as to how this methodological device informs Hegel's political philosophy without providing a substantive answer. In my view, this structure informs Hegel's distinction between civil society and the state and gives him a conceptual tool for thinking through how political structures relate to economic structures.
5. SW VI, 352.
6. SW VI, 352.
7. *Encyclopedia* (1827), §181.
8. SW VII, 472.
9. *Encyclopedia* (1830), §198.
10. SW VI, 425.
11. SW VI, 426.
12. "Like the solar system, so too for example in the realm of practical philosophy the state is a system of syllogisms. 1) The *individual* (the person) syllogizes itself through its *particularity* (the physical and mental needs, the development of which is given in civil society) together with its *universal* (society, right, law, the government). 2) The will, the activity of individuals, is the mediating factor, which gives the needs of society, their right, satisfaction, as well as giving society its fulfillment and realization. 3) But the universal (state, government, right) is the substantial middle term, in which the

individuals and their satisfaction have and maintain their fulfilled reality, mediation and existence.” *Encyclopedia*, 1830, § 198.

13. The *Encyclopedia* version also e.g. makes use of the term ‘civil society’ which is not used in the *Logic* version, but clearly implied by the notion of ‘external wants.’ This term as well points towards a closer conceptual link to the *Philosophy of Right*.
14. SW VII, 348.
15. SW VII, 347.
16. SW VII, 349.
17. In this respect, Hegel’s theory of need bears a marked resemblance to a contemporary theorist who also uses the term ‘system of needs’: Jean Baudrillard. He argues as well against the notion that it is possible to reduce human needs to a certain set of natural ones, and he argues the real driving force in the development of new needs is not the pursuit of comfort on the part of the consumer, but rather the needs of industry to find new avenues for marketing their products.
18. This aspect of Hegel’s critique of the division of labor is more explicit in his lectures on these paragraphs than in the *Philosophy of Right* itself, particularly the lecture course from 1822–1823.
19. The classic articulation of this reading is in Avineri, *Hegel’s Theory*, 87–97, although this reading does not establish a direct comparison to Marx’s conception of alienation.
20. The clearest development of this reading is by Norbert Waszek, *The Scottish Enlightenment and Hegel’s Account of Civil Society* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1988), 205–229. The strength of Waszek’s reading consists in the detail with which he demonstrates that all of the major points that Hegel makes in criticizing the moral and social consequences of the division of labor are almost exactly prefigured in the works of Adam Smith. Where his work lacks however is in attempting to locate Hegel’s solutions to these problems, which are not so clearly indebted to political economy.
21. *Ibid.*, 228.
22. SW VII, 344.
23. These sorts of arguments are not completely lacking from the works of political economists. Smith and before him Hume also argue that economic development helps to promote stronger social bonds and more effective political institutions. Smith writes, for instance: “. . . commerce and manufacture gradually introduced order and good government, and with them the liberty and security of individuals . . . This, although it has been the least observed is by far the most important of all their effects. Mr. Hume is the only writer who, so far as I know, has taken notice of it.” Cited by Norbert Waszek, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 226. However, this argument is generally secondary in Smith’s works to another argument regarding the value of economic growth, namely that it raises the standard of living of all

in society. Thus Hegel's innovation is to preserve this secondary argument in political economy while rejecting the truth of the primary one.

24. "The human proves in its dependence and in its going beyond this dependence and its universality, at first by multiplying the needs and the means of their satisfaction and then through the dissecting and differentiation of the concrete need in distinct parts and aspects, which themselves become particularized, and thereby abstract." SW VII, 348.
25. SW VI, 425.
26. *Encyclopedia* (1830), §198.
27. Marx developed this critique in his 1843 manuscript 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*.'
28. From here it is possible to view in the correct light Hegel's solution to the '*Abstumpfung*' of the worker in industrial labor (c.f. § 198): as work becomes more mechanistic, it becomes possible to replace the worker with a machine, thus saving human labor from the most mechanistic tasks, and from the ill effects of such tasks. Of course Hegel realizes that workers in actual industrial economies are for the most part adversely effected by the introduction of machines into the labor process, since more efficient labor processes lead to greater unemployment (c.f. 1822–1823 lectures on §198). But this merely points towards the problem of unemployment, which for Hegel must be dealt with on another level (c.f. next syllogism). The real problem in England according to Hegel lies in the dissolution of the traditional 'corporation' structure as a form of political regulation of economic activities, and the fact that workers would attack factory machines is symptomatic of this deeper lack in the political structure.
29. "In the system of needs, the subsistence and well being of each individual is a mere possibility, the reality of which is conditioned by arbitrariness and natural particularity, as well as by the entire system of needs. . . . But the real right of particularity also demands that the arbitrariness of this or that purpose be sublated and that the undisturbed right of person and property be restored, as well as that the insuring of the subsistence and well being of the individual be treated and realized as a right." SW VII, 382.
30. SW VII, 389.
31. SW VII, 389.
32. SW VII, 390.
33. Cf. Avineri, *Hegel's Theory*, 147–154 and Adriann Peperzak, *Modern Freedom: Hegel's Legal, Moral and Political Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), 462–467.
34. Cf. Stephen Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 112–119.
35. SW VII, 396–397.
36. C.f. remark to §301.
37. SW VII, 468–469.

38. C.f. SW VII, 470.
39. §§303A in *Philosophy of Right*.
40. Hegel emphasizes this point in a later lecture on the subject (C.f. *Zusatz* to §§290). “For some time past . . . the lower classes, the mass of the population have been left more or less unorganized. And yet it is of the utmost importance that the masses should be organized, because only so do they become mighty and powerful. Otherwise they are nothing but a heap, an aggregation of atomic units. Only when the particular associations are organized members of the state are they possessed of legitimate power.”

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